

# PLUCK AND LUCK

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# AL, THE BOY ACROBAT

### OR, FLIP FLOPPING INTO FAME AND FORTUNE

By ALLYN DRAPER

CHAPTER I.—The Circus Billboards

It was a beautiful day in the month of May. Gathered about a billboard that had been temporarily erected along the side of the little park in the center of the village of Wyburn, in central New York, was a crowd of boys ranging from ten to eighteen years of age. Pasted upon the billboard in question were flaming posters which announced that "Rawson's Great London Circus and Menagerie" was coming to Wyburn, and that it would be there, "rain or shine," on the 23d inst. Standing on the outskirts of the crowd of boys standing on the outskirts of the crowd of boys and taking no part in the conversation, was a bright, handsome, blue-eyed, curly-haired youth of about eighteen years. This youth was Albert Payson, but was commonly called "Al" by the other boys. There was something of a mystery about the handsome youth. He was not a native of Wyburn, but had appeared in the village one evening a few weeks before the day on which we introduce him to the reader's notice and had introduce him to the reader's notice and had made the rounds of the business houses, asking for work. On being asked for references, he said, frankly, that he had none to give, and when asked where he was from, stated that he had no home, but wished to get settled down somewhere, as he was tired of running around. Impressed favorably by the frank, honest face of Al, "Old Man Boggs," who kept a feed store, had given the youth work, but as Mr. Boggs' business was not a very extensive or lucrative one, he could do little more than board Al in fact in the court of t tle more than board Al-in fact, in three weeks' time the youth had received just two dollars in cash from the old man. Al was looking at the billboards, the same as were the rest, but there was a good-natured smile hanging around the corners of his handsome mouth as he listened to the extravagant language of the youths. The smile was not one of scorn, but more of sympathy with the youths in question, but Tom Burke, who was the village bully, noticed the smile on Al's face and interpreted it to be one of scorn. At any rate, he pretended to. He had been wanting a chance to pick a fuss with the young stranger ever since he first appeared in the village, but had found no excuse for doing so but now he had found no excuse for doing so, but now he saw his opportunity and was quick to improve it.
"What yer grinnin' bout, Al Payson?" he
growled, frowning fiercely and stepping up close

Al made no reply, but looked his questioner

straight in the eyes with a cool, unflinching look, mingled with which was a tincture of scorn.
"Didn't you hear me?" asked Tom Burke, an-

grily.

Al nodded.
"Yes, I heard you," he replied, quietly.
"Well, then w'y don't yer answer? I axed yer
"Well, then wilk grinnin' about?" wot yer wuz grinnin' about?"
Al nodded again.
"I know you did," he said, as quietly as be-

fore.
"See here," Tom cried, "yer don't know me,
I reckon. Yer don't know thet yer goin't ter git yerself inter trubble by puttin' on sech high an' mighty airs, but I knows et, an' so does there boys here. I wants ter know woe yer wuz laffin' at, an' I wants ter know et mighty quick, for I think yer wuz makin' fun uv us fellers, an' I wants ter tell yer thet we're ez good ez ye air enny day in ther week. Now answer."

Al started and a troubled looked appeared on

"I was not making fun of you, boys," he said quickly, addressing not Tom Burke, but the other boys. "I would not do such a thing for the world. There was no reason why I should want to make fun of you. I was looking at the pictures, the same as you were, and I hope you will believe me when I say that the smile on my face did not mean anything of that kind. I was smiling at what you were saying, but there was no idea of making fun of you in my mind."
"Bah! Tell that ter ther mareens!" cried Tom

Burke, who, not being a judge of human nature and seeing the look of distress on Al's face, thought the youth was frightened and was disclaiming any idea of making sport for fear he might get a thrashing. "Yer acknowledges thet yer wuz laffin' at us fellers, an' than is jest wun thing yer kin do."

"What is that?" as Tom Burke paused

"What is that?" as Tom Burke paused. "'Polergize ter ther hull crowd of us, an' say thet yer knows thet we air better nor wot ye air, thet's wot!"

A flash of scorn shot into the eyes of the handsome youth and he gave Tom Burke a look that made him almost jump, it was so sharp and piercing and so full of bitter scorn.

"Yes, I'll apoligize, and acknowledge that you are better than I-I do not think," Al said, al-

Al had spoken coolly and calmly, but there

was an earnestness to his tone that was not to be mistaken, and even Tom Burke was impressed. He was rendered terribly angry by the youth's words, however, and with a howl of rage he

sprang at Al like a tiger.
"I'll maul ther life outer yer!" he cried, and he began to rain blows at the handsome face of the youth who had angered him so. But if he thought to beat his opponent down he was soon to realize his mistake, for Al Payson was as fine an amateur sparrer as there was in the whole State of New York, if not in the United States, and the way he parried the blows of Tom Burke was beautiful to see. He parried, ducked, side-stepped and brought into play all the elements of scientific defense, watched by the crowd of boys in breathless excitement and admiration, and then finally, when Tom had become tired by his own exertions so that he was forced to drop his arms, Al took the offensive and rained in blow after blow at a terrific rate, striking the surprised and almost dazed youth whenever and wherever he wished, driving him backward several yards, when Tom, who was an awkward youth, tripped himself, and one of Al's blows catching him just at that instant, down he went, kerthump. The boys did not know this, however, and thought that Al was in luck to have floored the bully. Their delight was great, and it showed in their faces but they did not done it showed in their faces, but they did not dare give voice to it, as had they done so Tom would have taken them one at a time and given each and every one of them a good thrashing later on. "Get up, you big booby!" cried Al, with scorn.

"What are you falling down for? To escape the licking you know you so well deserve and going to get? You can't escape. I am going to give it to you now, if I have to do it while you are on the run, so you might as well get up and face the music as nearly like a man as is possible. Get up, quick, and I will knock you down once to show you the difference between being knocked

down and falling down."

Evidently Tom did not like it, for he lay still for a few seconds and then rose to a sitting pos-

ture and groaned in a dismal manner.

"I'm 'most killed!" he howled. "I've be'n hit with er club. Ther cuss tried ter kill me. He's got er rock in his han's, fellers—I know et. Look an' see ef he hain't."

"Oh, get up, baby, and quit howling!" cried Al in a tone of contempt. "I hit with my fist, nothing else, and you know it. You're the biggest baby I've run across lately. I don't see how you ever managed to become the bully of Wyburn. You have no more courage than a rabbit."

"I'll show yer whether I heven't er not!" howled Tom, scrambling to his feet. "I kin lick yer—I know I kin, an' I'm a-goin' ter, too! I'll pound yer ha'f ter death."

Then he rushed at his lively antagonist again. Al gave ground not at all, and, taking the offensive from the start, showered the blows upon the youth and forced him back till he was almost against the billboards, and then, getting a good opening, he let go a terrific stroke, which caught Tom in the breast and hurled him against the billboard as if he had been shot out of a cannon. Crash went the boards, and, not having been braced very strongly, one section, or panel, of the billboards was knocked backward by Tom's body, the top portion toppled over forward and. with a

crash, down came the entire section on top of the fallen youth, who kicked and floundered around underneath the boards like some wild animal in a new kind of trap and howled like a pig. under a gate.

#### CHAPTER II .- Al and Dick.

"A feller'd think Tom wuz killed ter heer him howl."

"Perhaps he is hurt," said Al Payson, with a show of concern. "The boards may be heavier than we think. Help me lift the boards off him, anyway," and two or three of the boys seized hold and helped Al and soon the howling youth was freed.

"Now, shut up; you are not hurt," said Al.

"Are you ready to fight again?"

Tom Burke grunted out some unintelligible reply and started away in the direction of his home, limping in an exaggerated manner and holding his hands on his stomach. Evidently he wished to create the impression that he had been severely injured by the billboards falling on him. This did not take well with the boys, however, who began jeering him.

"Where yer goin', Tom?"
"What's ther matter?"

"What yer limpin' fur?"
As for the other boys, they were delighted, and one of their number, a bright-faced, handsome youth of sixteen years, who had stood aloof and had but little to say, cried out:
"Three cheers for Al Payson, the champion

boxer and whitest boy in Wyburn!"

And the cheers were given with a will, causing Tom Burke to grit his teeth with rage and discom-

"Ther boys won't be afeerd uv me enny more," he said to himself, "an' I won't dare ter bother

"em. Oh, Al Payson, I—I'd like ter choke yer!"

"Thank you, boys," said Al, earnestly. "I am glad that you feel friendly toward me. I was afraid that you would believe what Tom Burke said—that I was laughing at you, which I was not, I assure you."

"Oh, we didn't believe that, Al."
With a nod to the boys, Al turned away, but was joined by Dick Hardy, who accompanied him to the feed store of Mr. Boggs.

"I have to go away for an hour or so, Al," said Mr. Boggs. "Stay here until I return."

"All right, sir," replied Al, and the old man

took his departure.

"Say, Al, I wish you would give me boxing lessons," said Dick, as soon as they were alone. "I have always wished to learn to box, and if I had known you could box I should have struck to give me lessons long ago."

"Not so very long ago," smiled Al. "I have been here only about three weeks."

"Well, I should have been after you right away, I mean," said Dick. "Say, will you give me lessons, Al?"

"I should be glad to, Dick, but we have no

gloves."

"I have two pairs—dandy gloves, too, Al—at home!" cried Dick, eagerly. "Will you come up this evening and give me a lesson? Say you will, that's a good fellow. We'll have some games, too,

and Mabel will play on the piano and sing for you.

I know you will like that, old fellow."

"You are right, Dick. I should like to hear your sister play and sing, and if you will promise to keep your promise regarding that part of the proposition, I will come up this evening after supper and give you a lesson."

"I promise, old man," eagerly. "Sis thinks the world and all of me and will do anything I ask her to. I guarantee that she shall play and sing for you all right"

for you all right."

#### CHAPTER III .- "Al, The Boy Acrobat."

After supper Al Payson made a careful toilet, dressed himself in the handsome suit that had been the wonder and envy of nearly all the young men of the village, and made his way to the home of Dick Hardy.

The Hardys were well-to-do and kept a servant,

who answered Al's ring at the door-bell, and ushered him into the parlor, which was lighted, as if company was expected. Of course, Al could not knew it, but this had been the work of Dick's sister Mabel, who, if the truth must be told, was greatly pleased at the prospect of having to play and sing for the handsome youth whom she had so far seen only at a distance. With feminine so far seen only at a distance. With feminine instinct, she recognized that Al Payson was different from the great majority of youths with whom she was acquainted.

Al was hardly seated when Dick came rushing into the parlor, and, seizing the youth's hand, shook it as heartily as if he had not seen him for six months at least, instead of three or four

hours.

"How are you, old fellow?" he cried. "Say, I'm glad to see you and so will sis be ah—, here she is now. Sis, this is Mr. Payson, of whom you have heard me speak; Al, my sister Mabel. Shake hands and be friends."

Mabel Hardy was indeed a beautiful girl and was as modest as she was beautiful. She acknowledged the introduction gracefully and extended her hand, over which AI bent with all the grace

of a Chesterfield.

"I am indeed pleased to make your acquaintance, Miss Hardy," Al said, with a pleasant smile, which enhanced his good looks in a wonderful manner. "Dick has spoken of you so such that I feel as if I had known you for some time.

"It is the same in my case with regard to your-self Mr. Payson," smiled Mabel. "Dick talks about you half the time. He thinks there is nobody

"Please play and sing something for us, Miss Hardy," said Al. "It has been so long since I heard any music that I am anxious to bear some."

"I am afraid you will be disappointed by my poor efforts," Mabel said, but she went to the piano and played and sang a number of pieces and was applauded freely by both Al and Dick, the latter being fond of music and rather proud of his pretty sister's abilities as a player and .

A couple of hours were spent very pleasantly and then Al asked Dick if he was ready to take his lesson. Dick said he was and then they repaired to a large attic room, which Dick had fixed up as a gymnasium, and donning the gloves, sparred for an hour, Al teaching Dick much that he could not have learned from any book on the art of self-defense, as it takes actual demonstration in practice to enable a learner to acquire science in the art of boxing.

Al did not see Mabel any more that evening, but went home as soon as the boxing lesson was ended, and for the first time in a long while he dreamed that night-dreamed of pretty, sweet-

faced Mabel Hardy.

This was the beginning of a very pleasant period for Al Payson, for he went to Dick Hardy's home every night to give Dick a lesson in boxing, but a couple of hours was spent in the parlor at music and games each evening and Al joined in the singing, he having a splendid tenor voice. Indeed so finely did he and Mabel sing together that the girl's parents came into the parlor to listen on several occasions.

All things must have an end, however, and this state of affairs came to an end-the day "Rawson's Great London Circus and Menagerie" came

to town.

On that morning Al was sent to deliver a lot of corn and baled hay at the show tents, the manager having bought some feed for the horses at the feed store of Mr. Boggs, and while unloading the hay and corn he overheard a conversation between two well-dressed men who were seated on a box a

few feet distant.

"I'll tell you what is the matter, Mr. Williams," said one, "the skipping out of Robbins leave us in a mighty bad hole The Wellington Brothers' great acrobatic work on the carpet and their tumbling and leaping from the springboard were our strongest features, and now to have the main one of the three skip out and leave us in the lurch in this fashion is—well, simply awful. Williams, what are we to do?"

"I give up, Thompson, old man," the other replied. "Say what made Robbins skip out anyway?"
"I'll tell you what I think. He has received an offer from Wells Brothers' Circus and has gone to join it, I am confident. He is really a very fine performer, you know, and we were paying him only fifty a week, while they have doubtless offered him seventy-five or a hundred. Money knocks, you know."

Al Payson had listened to this conversation with eager interest. He was a boy, and was naturally interested in everything pertaining to circuses and he understood the situation perfect-ly. Robbins, Harkins and Burton had been doing acrobatic and springboard leaping work together under the name of the "Wellington Brothers," and Robbins, the best performer of the three, had deserted the show, leaving his two companion per-formers and the owners of the show in the lurch. As all this passed through Al's mind a sudden impulse seized him, and, stepping quickly forward, he confronted the two men who, looked up

"I overheard your conversation, sirs," he said, "and now I would like to ask what you will give me to take the place of the man Robbins?"

The men stared at the youth for a few moments in amazement and then looked at each other and laughed.

A peculiar, determined look appeared in the keen blue eyes of Al Payson

"I don't blame you gentlemen for doubting me," he said, quietly, "but I suppose that if you were to see you would believe."

"Oh, yes!" with a smile.

"Well, if I prove to you right here that I am a good acrobat in ground work, will you give me I trial on the springboard and give me a chance to prove that I can do what I said?"

"Sure thing," was the reply. "What can you do on the ground?"
"I'll show you." With these words Al looked about him to see that there were no snags or boards with nails in them to light on, and then, Bracing himself, he looked at the men, who were watching him intently with something of interest, and said:

"I can do a whole lot of things, but there is one difficult trick which very few acrobats, so I am informed, can do, and if I do that I should think it would be sufficient to cause you to decide to give

"What is the trick?" Mr. Williams asked.

"This, I stand on one foot, turn a half somer-sault, make a half reverse while in the air and light with my face in the opposite direction from what it was when I made the leap."

"Ah!" ejaculated Williams, with a quick glance at Thompson; "do that little trick for us my boy, and we will show you right inside the tent and in-

froduce you to the springboard."
"Very well, sir. Watch me."

Then, crouching slightly and balancing himself on his left foot, Al suddenly sprang into the air. In he went for a distance of five feet at least and then he turned a beautiful back somersault, giving a peculiar twist of the body as he did so, and alighted with his face in the opposite direction from what it had been when he made the Pap.

Cries of amazement escaped both men, and, meaning to their feet, they one after another seized

the youth's hand and shook it heartily.

"Come along with us, young man," said Wil-Mams, " and show us what you can do on the springboard."

"Just as soon as I tie my horse so he can't run away," said Al, and when he had done this he entered the big tent with the two men, who were the proprietors of the show. Two were practicing on a carpet in the ring, and after asking Al his name, Williams introduced him to them, calling them Harkins and Barton, and explaining that they were the two members left of the "Wellingon Brothers.'

When the two learned that Al claimed to be an crobat they looked at him in supercilious manmer, but, doffing his coat, hat and shoes, he leaped Into the carpet and did some work that made the fellows' eyes stick out—and those of the pro-

rietors of the circus as well.

The proprietors engaged Al Payson on the spot of fifty dollars a week, to take the place of Tobbins, who had skipped, and when the "Wel-Ington Brothers" appeared for their act in the atternoon performance Mabel Hardy, who sat with her parents in a reserved seat, uttered an exclamation:

"Look! Look!" she cried, pointing to the three men standing upon the carpet in the middle of the rag; "that middle person is Al Payson. What

bes it mean?"

Al heard the girl's exclamation, and, looking straight at the beautiful girl, he bowed and kissed his hand toward her and then, turning, took his position for beginning the "Wellington Brothers' Great Acrobatic Act," as the show bills demonstrated it.

Al then went to the house which was only a short distance from the feed store, and after telling Mrs. Boggs that he was going away, and listening to the expression of her regrets—for, like her husband, she had learned to like the bright manly youth, and hated to have him go away-Al went to his room and packed his clothing and other belongings in a crip. Then, having

nothing else to do, Al went out for a stroll.

Just upon the outskirts of Wyburn, in the midst of beautiful grounds, from five to ten acres in extent, was a beautiful mansion—the one building of the kind in the village. This mansion was owned by a stern-visaged man of about fifty years of age, whose name was Austin Hanover. He had a family consisting of wife and two children, a boy of eighteen years, named Gerald, and a girl of sixteen, named Gertrude. This family was very exclusive, mixing with the vil-lage people very little; and this little was confined to the brother and sister, who condescended to occasionally grace some social event among the best people with their presence. The elder Hanovers were rarely seen anywhere, save driving about the country in their handsome carriage.

For some reason this place and these people had always interested Al Payson, and now, on this, his last afternoon in Wyburn, the youth unconsciously almost turned his steps in that direc-

tion.

Al walked past the mansion upon the street running in front of the grounds, and then, turning the first corner beyond, he walked in the new direction until he reached the street running along

the rear of the grounds.

Al started onward, slowly, looking in toward the splendid mansion, and just as he came opposite a gate, which stood partially open, an impulse came over him to enter the grounds. He looked at the little open-faced silver watch, and seeing he had plenty of time to spare, he walked through the open gateway, and made his way slowly toward the stately mansion, only portions of which could be seen through the openings be-tween the trees. There were paths leading in various directions, two driveways, beautifully graveled, one leading to the right and one to the left, seats under the trees, arbors, beautiful green grass—everything that goes to make up a scene of beauty, and as Al Payson had an eye for the beautiful in Nature, he was impressed.

One path led directly toward the rear entrance of the mansion, and Al followed this, walking slowly, and when he had approached to within a few rods of the mansion he noticed that the rear door was standing open. He thought nothing of this, but as he was virtually a trespasser, paused, and leaning back against a tree, gazed at the building before him with dreamy eyes. He was standing thus when suddenly he was startled by a voice crying out in accents of mortal terror: "Murder! Help! help! help!" The voice came from within the mansion, and

was seemingly on the second floor. This much flashed through Al's mind, and he sprang toward the open rear doorway with the speed of a grey-

"Where are you?" he cried. "Help is at hand! "In which room are you? Answer, if you can!" and the youth tried a door on the right-hand side, to find it was locked.

Instantly there was the sound of shuffling feet on the inside of the room this door opened into and a voice cried, gaspingly, as if it were a dying effort:

"In here! Help! Mur-"

"Help is at hand!" Al cried loudly. "We will be in there in a jiffy!" and with the words the youth leaped against the door.

The door shook, and gave way slightly before the fierce assault of the youth, but still with-

stood his efforts.

"I'll fetch it next time," the youth muttered, and setting his teeth, he leaped against the door once more, with all his might, and as he had predicted, the door gave way with a crash. Any one else would have fallen to the floor as a result of his own impetus, but Al-was an Acrobat, and by leaping on through the doorway, he kept upon his feet and was just in time to see a rough, evil-looking fellow climbing through a window at the farther side of the room. That the fellow was a footpad Al did not doubt, and he leaped forward and attempted to catch the scoundrel before he could get through the opening. He was too late, however, the man dropping from the window just as the youth was about to seize him by the wrist.

Feeling that he could not catch the fellow, who had alighted upon his feet without injury, and was running away at the top of his speed, Al turned his attention to the scene within the room. He almost feared to look, as he expected nothing else than that he would see a human form lying upon the floor, weltering in gore, but no such sight met his gaze. A man lay upon the door, true-a sternvisaged man of about fifty years of age, but he was not bleeding from any wound, so far as Al could see, and as he looked the man suddenly gave a gasp and sat up with a jerk.

"Who are you? What has happened!" the man asked, as his eyes fell on Al. "Ah!" with a start. "I remember now. Sam Sto—I mean a footpad entered my room and attacked me-tried to murder me! Where is he now? Did he escape? Did you frighten him away?"

"Yes, sir," replied Al, quietly. "I heard you cry for help and came up here and frightened him away before he could complete his crime."

At the sound of Al's voice, the man started, and looked at the youth searchingly. He gave another

"Who are you?" he asked, "and where did you come from? You do not live in the village?"

"My name is Albert Payson, sir," replied. "I

am a newcomer to the village, having been here only a few weeks."

"Ah! that is it? I thought I did not remember having seen you before. Are you -do you intend to make Wyburn your permanent home?"

There was repressed earerness in the man's tone, and Al noted it and wondered at it. "I cannot say for certain, sir," he replied. "Why

do you ask?" "Oh, out of curiosity; or, I was thinking I

might give you employment if you were desirous of securing work."

And as Al explained his connection with the circus, the man was plainly agitated. As At started to leave he said:

"One moment, in addition to my thanks, which I hereby heartily tender you, I wish to make you a little present of a more substantial character, it wou will accent it. I—" you will accept it. I-

"Thank you, no!" said Al, almost coldly. " I want no pay for rendering assistance to a fellow being in distress. Good evening!" and he left the room, the man staring after him with a strange look upon his rather sinister face.

After supper, Al went to the home of Dick and Mabel Hardy, and spent an hour there very pleas-

antly, notwithstanding the fact that he was soon to go away from the village.

"Mabel and I are going to the show to-night, to see you act again, Al!" called Dick, and this knowledge gave the youth considerable pleasure when he left.

He made his way to the home of Mr. Boggs, got his grip, bade the two old people good-by, and then made his way at a rapid walk to the show grounds, and entered the dressing-tent. His two acting partners, Harkins and Burton, were already dressing, and Al began to do so, too. He had just finished, when a rough-looking fellow entered the tent and said something to one of the actors, who quickly left the tent, and then the fellow, who was a man of fifty years of age, and one whom drink had reduced to the ranks of bums, turned and faced Al, who gave a start, and almost uttered an exclamation aloud. The fellow was the person he had seen escaping from the room of Mr. Hanover, in the mansion, only a few hours before—the person who had, as Al believed, tries to murder Mr. Hanover!

As this man's eyes fell upon Al, he gave a

start and exclaimed, excitedly:
"W-who are y-you? W-where d-did you come f-from?"

"My name is Albert Payson. What is yours?" "My name? Oh, my name is Stokes—Sam Stokes. Don't mind me, young fellow. I'm a roustabout, and I say things sometimes that

haven't much reason to them. Don't mind me."
"Very well, I won't then," and Al went aheal getting ready to go into the ring for the acrobatic act on the carpet. He pretended to pay no more attention to Stokes, but Al was a shrewd youth and he kept watch of the fellow out of the corner of his eyes, and saw that the man was eyeing him searchingly; was evidently studying him.

Presently the call came for the "Wellington Brothers," and Al and his two companions were into the ring and took up their position on the carpet. Al swept the sea of faces in the reserved sections, and presently located Dick and Mabel Hardy. He gave them a smile and wave of the hand both waving back, and then the act commenced.

As in the day performance, Al did the more difficult single feats and took the most prominent part in the "brother" acts and he received quite a good deal of applause, for the majority of the people present had learned by this time that A Payson, the boy who had been working for Mr. Boggs, the feed-store man, was the youthful member of the "Wellington Brothers" trio.

At last the act was finished, and the three returned to the dressing-tent, and Al looked around for Sam Stokes. The man was nowhere to be seen, however, and the youth asked his two companions a few questions regarding the man. They said Stokes was a roustabout, much given to drink, but a good workman and thoroughly up in the circus business.

As at the afternoon performance, the men took turns running down the inclined track leading to the springboard and, leaping onto the spring-board, turned somersaults. Then the two small elephants were brought in and all turned over these, after which the large elephant was placed between the two smaller ones, and all turned over

Next camels were brought and added to the aggregation, and several of the tumblers dropped out, as this was too big a leap for them. Al and five or six of the others made the leap, however and then the horses were brought out.

All the performers save Al and his two "brother" actors dropped out now, and the three made their way up to the top of the inclined track, and one after the other ran down and turned a somersault over the aggregation of animals. This performance brought them considerable applause, and they returned and repeated it. They were applauded, again and again, and then Al went back up to the top of the inclined track alone.

As in the afternoon performance, the ringmaster made the announcement that Al would turn a double somersault over the animals, and when he had finished Al made the run, leaped upon the springboard and turned a beautiful double somersault, alighting on his feet on the other side, neatly and smoothly as could be. And then such a cheer went up! It almost burst the canvas roof of the tent and, after bowing in every direction, Al made his way back to the top of the inclined track and, running down, made the leap a second time, turning the double somersault as neatly and successfully as before.

Again the spectators cheered and although Al tried to escape to his dressing-room he could not do it. Mr. Williams stepping out and telling him to repeat the leap.

Al did so, with perfect success, and then without pausing for an instant ran to the dressingtent and disappeared within it.

One of the acts which now came on was that of Marie Monsell, the lady tiger tamer, who, within an inclosure made of steel bars fastened together with iron chains, put so closely together that an animal of any size could not get through the openings, put three tamed tigers through a series of maneuvers. This inclosure was about twenty feet in diameter, and was open at the top, but the flaring gasoline and electric lights being right above, this was sufficient to keep the tigers from leaping over the top of the inclosure, the steel bars being only about seven or eight feet in height. The cage containing the tigers was backed up against the inclosure at a point where there was an opening the size of the door of the cage, and the tigers were made to leap down a sort of bridge reaching from the floor of the cage to the ground, when they would be within the inclosure. This inclosure was, of course, inside the ring where the main performance had taken place.

The lady performer, Marie Monsell, had en-

tered the cage, after it had been backed up against the inclosure, and having opened the door at the rear had driven the tigers down into the in-closure. Then she followed, and at once had begun putting the animals through their series of tricks. Whether the lady was careless, or whether the tigers were out of humor will never be known, but certain it is that for some reason the largest and most fierce-looking beast of the three refused to obey his mistress and, as was her custom, she applied the whip and tried to make the obstinate animal do as ne was bidden. While she was whipping the tiger he crouched back and snarled with anger, and becoming suddenly very angry, the great beast gave utterance to a shriek of rage and leaped upon the hapless woman, bearing her to the earth! Then, as a shriek escaped the poor woman, and a great roar of fear, of mortal ter-ror, went up from the assembled multitude, the tiger, with both great paws upon its mistress' form, stood staring around at the great sea of faces in savage defiance.

## CHAPTER V.-Al's Brave and Wonderful Act.

As the woman's shriek and the roar of terror from the people fell upon Al Payson's hearing, he leaped to the doorway of the dressing-tent and looked out. The sight he saw almost froze the blood in his veins, but, shaking off the terrible chill of fear for the safety of the imperiled woman, Al leaped out of the dressing-tent and ran toward the inclosure within which the terrible drama was being enacted, with all his might. As he ran a plan flashed through the youth's mind, and he determined to enter the inclosure by the shortest route—viz., over the top of the steel bars. To this end he selected a spot from which to make the leap, and, increasing his speed to a wonderful sprint, he leaped upon the spot he had selected with all his might and then shot into the air as if thrown by a giant catapult. Up! up he went, and when even with the top of the iron bars, Al turned a somersault, clearing the top of the inclosure neatly and alighted on his feet within the inclosure, to the affright of the tiger, which gave vent to a startled snarl of fear and rage commingled, and crouched almost to the ground. The brute was unwilling to give up its prey, however, and stood its ground, eyeing Al with eyes which shone with a wicked light.

As the great crowd witnessed the wonderful and daring feat of Al, the boy acrobat, a great cry of fear went up and then at a gesture from him it became silent, and watched the scene with staring eyes and bated breath. Never had such a startling scene been witnessed as was before their eyes at that moment, and it is probable that there was hardly an individual in that entire crowd who did not think the daring youth and the woman as well would be torn to pieces before their eyes. Dick Hardy and his sister Mabel had their eyes. recognized Al the instant he appeared and started to run toward the inclosure, and they had watched the youth with wondering eyes. They could not think what he was going to do, until he had leaped into the air and turned the somersault into the inclosure, and then, with a cry, Mabel caught hold of Dick's arm.
"He will be killed, Dick!" she cried. "He will

be torn to pieces by that terrible animal! Oh, it

is terrible!-horrible! Cannot-will not some one go to his aid? Cannot something be done to help

"I'm afraid not, sis," replied Dick, in a hoarse, strained voice. "Wait, though; maybe Al knows what he is about. He is a level-headed fellow generally. Maybe he will succeed in saving the woman's life, and his own, too."

"Oh, I hope so, Dick But I don't see how he can possibly do it."

'Neither do I; but watch!"

Al Payson was a youth who, in his short lifetime of a little less than eighteen years, had had many strange adventures. This is neither the time nor place to speak of any of those adventures: suffice it to say that the youth had years ago learned that he was possessed of a strange power—the power of controlling even the wildest of wildest beasts by simply looking them in the eyes. The possession of this power had been of great service to Al on more than one occasion, and he thought that he could make it of service now, not only to protect himself from injury, but to save the life of the brave woman who, while not severely injured as yet, and having full possession of her senses, lay perfectly still and kept her eyes nearly closed, looking out between the nearly closed lids. To this end, then, after mak-ing the gesture for the people to keep silent, Al faced the crouching tiger and fixed his eyes full upon those of the animal. The battle of the eyes was on. It was a strange one—the will power of the human against the instinct of the brute to leap and tear and rend his foes.

For half a minute the youth stood there, transfixing the animal with his piercing gaze, and then slowly the boy raised his right hand and extended it toward the tiger. The animal had not yet given up, though its eyes were wavering, and it growled and crouched, but Al kept his eyes fixed full upon those of the brute, and presently extended the other arm. Then, after standing this way for perhaps a half-minute, the youth took a step forward; again he waited, and then he took another step, and then, believing that he was safe in making the attempt he had in view, Al suddenly cried, "Back!" and leaped straight at the crouching animal, as if intending to grasp it with his hands. The plan succeeded, for with a startled, snarling growl the tiger leaped back and, crouching, gazed sidewise at the daring youth, a frightened look in its yellow orbs.
"Up, lady!" said Al, in a low, tense voice, and
Marie Monsell leaped to her feet.

"Thank you, and may heaven bless you, my brave boy!" she cried. "Now we can control them,

I think.

"Give me your whip," said Al, and the woman obeyed. Then, stepping boldly forward and frowning in the fiery face of the tiger, with a look that made the animal tremble, gave the brute a cut with the whip, at the same instant crying,

"Into the cage, Sir! Into the cage!"

With a wild half-shriek of fear, half snarl of rage, the tiger made a great leap, reaching the bridge leading to the cage and rushed into and to the farther end of the cage, where he paused of necessity and, turning, stood staring out at Al with great yellow eyes that glowed with anger and terror. At the same moment Marie Monsell drove the other two tigers to and up the bridge,

they being much more docile than their companion, and they were soon in the cage, after which Al swung the door to with a clang and fastened it. Then, woman-like, as a great shout of tri-umph and admiration went up from the multi-tude, the overwrought woman tiger-tamer fainted in Al's arms.

"Hurrah for Payson!" chrieked Dick Hardy,

wildly.

"Three cheers for the boy acrobat!"

Such, and scores of more, were the exclamations given vent to by the excited people, and while they were uttering the exclamations Al told a couple of roustabouts to pull the cage out of the way, after which he lifted the unconscious woman through the opening in the inclosure. Marie Monsell was then laid upon some carpet and a doctor was called down from the crowd and began working to resuscitate the woman who had come so close to death's door and escaped.

#### CHAPTER VI.-Al and Marie Monsell.

Marie Monsell had only swooned, and soon recovered consciousness, and when she was able to walk to her dressing-room she was assisted to it by one of the lady performers. Al hurried away and got out of sight within his dressing-room as quickly as possible, but he had scarcely got there before the people began calling for him. He did not wish to go out, but the people would not quiet down, and finally Mr. Thompson came and asked him to come into the ring. So Al appeared in the ring and bowed in several different directions. his face as red as a beet, for he really was em-barrassed. He managed to stand with his face in the direction of Dick and Mabel Hardy while the proprietor made a little speech, telling the people what a wonderful feat it was that "Master Albert Wellington" had performed. He dilated upon it to some length, stating that the tiger was one that was very dangerous, and said that the feat the youth had performed was one that no other living person could duplicate. When Mr. Thompson had finished his speech the people yelled, "Speech! Speech! Al Payson, speech!" and the proprietor told Al to make a little speech of some kind.

"I can't make a speech," he said, in a low tone, but the proprietor said he must say something, and as the people kept on clamoring for a speech.

Al said:

"Ladies and Gentlemen: I do not know why you should wish me to make a speech. I have done nothing that calls for anything of that kind. I was in no danger when I leaped into the inclosure and faced the tiger, as I have always possessed the power to control all kinds of animals, and I knew I could control the tiger. I can only say that I am glad I saved the lady's life, and I am also glad that you appreciate it. That is all. Good-night, and thank you!"

Then Al withdrew to the dressing-tent, pausing at the door an instant to wave his hand to Dick and Mabel. As he stepped inside the tent he was faced by Sam Stokes, who regarded the youth

with ill-disguised eagerness.

"Well, my boy," he said, "you did a good thing awhile ago, didn't you? You saved Marie's life."
"I suppose I did," Al replied, coolly.

"Of course you did! That tiger would have chewed her to pieces but for you. I've told her he would do the trick, more than once, but she has always laughed at me. I guess she will give the matter her serious attention now."

"That is a dangerous animal," assented Al. "He is not a fit brute to take into an open inclosure to

do tricks with."

"You are right, my boy, and I hope you will

try to persuade Marie not do so any more."
"I don't suppose persuasion from me would have any effect," replied Al. "She is her own boss, and has a right to do as she pleases.'

"Oh, yes, she has the right to do so, but if the youth who saved her life asks her to do a thing she will certainly be willing to listen to him."

"Maybe so."

"I am sure of it; but, by the way, Al-I believe you said your name was Al?"

"Yes."

"Well, where did you learn to control wild animals by looking at them?"

Al started slightly and looked at Stokes in a wondering manner. Then he seemed to fall into a deep study and, instead of answering, dropped his head and pondered for quite awhile.
"Why don't you answer my question, Al?"

asked Stokes, presently, after waiting until he

became impatient.

"I was wondering where I had seen you be-fore?" he repeated. "D-do you mean recently or —or some time ago?"

"Oh, a long, long time ago," Al replied. "Your face seems familiar, but I can't think where I have ever seen it before."

A peculiar look appeared in Stokes' face.

"I guess you have never seen me before," he said. "But you haven't told me how you came to possess the power to control wild animals."

"I have always possessed the power," Al replied. "When I was a boy I used to control the most ferocious dogs, and as I grew older I learned by experience that I could control wild animals of all kinds."

"Ah! "Ah! And did you—did you ever do that kind of work in shows, Al?"

There was an eager look on Stokes' face that did not escape Al's notice, and he wondered what it could mean.

"No, I never did any of that kind of work in lows," he replied.

A look expressive of doubt and unbelief ap-peared on the face of the man for a moment, and

then disappeared as Stokes said:

"Well, don't forget to try to persuade Marie Monsell to stop doing tricks with that tiger, my boy. He'll be the death of her if she keeps on, and you may save her life by speaking a few words. If she doesn't stop it you will only have lengthened her lease of life a little instead of saving it."

"I will try to dissuade her," the youth replied.
"I know the tiger is not a fit animal to use in such a performance. Have they no other in the menagerie that would do to take the place of this one?"

"Yes, there are others in there that might be used with safety, but Marie has insisted on keeping on with the brute that so nearly robbed her of her life a short time ago."

"In sneak to her and try to get her to make

THE the change," said Al, and at this moment a call boy entered the tent and approached Al.

Marie Monsell wants to see you in her dressing-tent," he said. "Will you come along now?" Go on!" urged Stokes.

"Yes, I will go with you," said Al. "Lead the

The boy led the way to the dressing-tent of Marie Monsell and, announcing Al, turned away. The lady arose from a stool as Al entered and,

advancing, held out her hand.
"I wish to thank you for saving my life, my boy!" she said, in a sad, sweet voice. "You are

the bravest boy I ever saw!"

"It was nothing," Al replied, blushing like a rl. "It was very easy for me to do what I did, girl. Mrs Monsell. I am an acrobat, you know, so all I had to do was to turn a flipflop into the in-closure; and then, as I have always been pos-sesser of the power to control animals with my eyes, it was a simple matter for me to rid you of the tiger."

"And that is the very thing which I wish to ask you about," the woman said, eagerly. "Sit down," and she indicated a stool, at the same time seating herself on the stool she had occupied when Al entered. Then, as Al seated himself,

she continued:

"You are a wild animal tamer, my boy, and I wish to ask where you learned how to do this? It is something that very few people can do."

Al had taken a good look at the woman, and

he found that she was seemingly about thirty-five years of age. She might be a year or two older or younger, but she was quite beautiful, and there was a sad look to her face and in her eyes, as if

she had known some great trouble.

"You ask me where I learned to control animals, lady, and I shall have to answer that I do not know. So far as I know, I have always known how but sometimes it seems to me that I remember, as in a dream, that I used to be taught the art, or whatever it may be, by a beautiful lady—but, of course, this may be a dream, a mere idle fancy."

The woman gazed into the handsome face of the boy intently, seachingly, and with something of eagerness in her beautiful eyes.

"You have been an animal tamer in shows, have you not, my boy?" she asked.

Al started, hesitated, looked all around to see that no one was near, and then said, in a low

"I will tell you, lady, if you will promise not

to tell any one; will you promise?"
"Certainly I will promise, my boy!" replied the lady, gently, and gazing searchingly and wonderingly into the youth's handsome face, which now, for some reason, had grown pale, as if the sub-ject brought up something that was frightening to him. "Go on, and tell me if you have not been

a wild animal tamer in shows.
"I have, lady," he replied, and then, sinking his voice, he said: "I have been traveling with shows ever since I can remember-practically all my life! And in that time I have been both animal tamer and acrobat and tumbler. When I was a little fellow I was with a man who claimed to be my uncle and guardian, and he was very cruel to me, beating me and sometimes nearly starving me, and I had do to whatever he told me to do. I do not know how old I was the time

when my first remembrance of the man begins, but I should judge I was four or five years old, and I was with him ten long, weary years, traveling with a dozen different shows, and in all parts of the world. I tried to escape from him a number of times, but was caught and brought back each time and, as I could not dispute his guardianship of me, or his right to control me, I did not appeal to outsiders for help, but kept on trying to escape, seizing every favorable opportunity, and at last succeeded, making my escape three years ago when the show we were with was in Central India. I made my way, after a month of hardship in the jungle, to Bombay and worked my way to Naples in Italy, where an American circus was showing. I got an engagement with this circus, appearing in the capacity of animal tamer and as an acrobat, and earned good money. I stayed with the circus a year, and traveled all over Europe, and went with it from there to South America, where we were for another year, traveling all over the continent. From there we came to the United States, and I was with the show seven or eight months here, showing over the eastern half of the country. I had saved considerable money and, desiring to rest up, I set out across New York State, walking, and pre-tending that I was in search of work. I got work with a man in this village, and have been here a few weeks, but when this show came to town the old fever returned and, as something seemed to tell me to join the show, I did so. I am glad I did so now, as I was enabled to save your life as a result."

#### CHAPTER VII .- On the Road.

Al paused and gazed dreamily at the ground,

while the woman, who had listened with eagerness to the strange story of the handsome youth, gazed upon Al's face as if fascinated.

"My poor boy!" she said, softly, reaching out and taking his hand and pressing it; "you have indeed had a hard time of it. I am glad, however, that you have joined this show, and I hope you will remain with it throughout the rest of the season"

the season." "I think I shall do so, lady," he said. "There is one thing I wish to ask of you, however, and that is that you will not take that tiger into the inclosure again. He is not fit to use in such work. You can never trust him. If you keep on with him he will be the death of you."

"I thank you for the interest you take in me, my boy," Marie Monsell replied, "but 'India' is my property, and the contract with the proprie-tors of the show calls for India's appearance once a day in the performance in the inclosure, so I

cannot leave him out, much as I would like to."
"That is too bad!" replied Al, sadly. "Well,
if you must keep on using India in the performonce, you must promise to let me appear in the inclosure with you each time. Will you do it?"

Marie Monsell hesitated. "Yes," she said, presently; "I promise. shall be in the inclosure each time and I thank you for your kindness. You are a noble youth."

"Don't talk to me that way, Mrs. Monsell," said Al. "We wish to be friends, do we not?"
"Indeed we do," and the lady laughed at the speech of the youth, in which he intimated that they could not be good friends if she persisted in

praising him. "I would not do anything to lose your friendship for the world, so I will not say anything more along that line, but will content myself with thinking it."
"Well, be careful not to think out loud," smiled

"I will be careful."

Suddenly Al started, as the clatter of boards came to his ears.

"They are taking down the seats," he said. "The performance is over, and I wish to see a couple of friends in the audience. It is too late now, however," with a sigh.

Marie Monsell smiled and then said:

"I am sorry, my boy, but I can tell you, if it will make you feel any better—and I think it will—that if it was the beautiful girl and her brother whom you talked to once this evening that you wished to see, it was not necessary. The girl will not forget you, my boy. I know the You may rest easy regarding her. When you return, after the season ends, she will be glad to see you—very, very glad. Ah! she is a beautiful girl, my boy, and a good one, too, I will warrant!"

Al blushed like a girl, but smiled and said:
"You are right; she is both beautiful and good.

She is the sweetest girl I have ever known, and I am coming back to Wyburn as soon as the season ends.'

"Bravo! my boy. And now, before you go, tell me your last name. It is not Wellington, I know."

"Payson is my name, Mrs. Monsell."

"And mine is Mary Scott. Monsell is my show name."

Then Al returned to the dressing-tent, reaching there just in time to accompany Harkins and Burton to the train, Rawson's Circus having a train of its own, numbering thirty cars, counting the sleeping-cars for the accommodation of the performers, of which there were three. given a berth just across the aisle from Harkins and Burton, and proceeded to make himself at home, this being far from the first time he had ever occupied such quarters. Harkins, who was watching Al pretty closely, noticed that the youth did not seem at a loss where to put his belong-ings, knowing where to look for receptacles for his clothing and trinkets, and the man became more than ever convinced that the youth had

traveled with a show at some time in his life.
"Well, how do you like the life of a showman,
as far as you have gone?" he asked, when Al had got his traps arranged.

got his traps arranged.

"Oh, first-rate," Al replied with a smile.

"You won't like it so well after you've been with shows as long as I have," said Burton.

"Maybe not," said Al, smiling again, in the same queer way Harkins had seen him do once before, and the man was more certain than ever that the youth was an old hand at the business.

"Say, Payson, where did you learn to do the animal-taming act?" Harking asked as he pro-

animal-taming act?" Harkins asked, as he proceeded to untie his shoes.

"I don't know, Mr. Harkins. I've always known how to do it, I guess. I cannot remember when I could not make animals obey me in that fashion."

"Well, it's lucky for Marie Monsell that you were at hand, my boy! She'd be a corpse right now had it not been for you."

"I think there is no doubt regarding that," Al

"If Marie doesn't stop using that tiger in her

act he'll be the death of her one of these days."
"That is what I told her. I tried to get her to promise not to use him any more, but she said her contract called for the appearance once each day of India—that's the tiger's name—in the in-

closure, in that act, so she has to use him."
"That's too bad. Thompson and Williams ought to let her off, though, after tonight's hap-

pening."

"I think so. If they do not do so, however, I am going to appear in the inclosude with her, and I think that with both of us to watch him he will not dare attempt any more funny business."

"That is a good plan; and it is good of you, too, my boy. I guess it will be safe to use India with both of you in the act."

"I think so."

The train started at this moment, and as it was late, being half-past eleven, and all were tired, the inmates of the car retired, and soon were sound asleep, as the life of a showman soon learns one to be able to go to sleep anywhere and at any time.

#### CHAPTER VIII .- A Brutal Bareback Rider.

Al Payson fell into the duties devolving upon him easily and naturally, and was soon perfectly at home. He seemed to know all that old veteran showmen knew, and his knowledge was taken note of by Harkins, and it made the man all the more sure that the youth was an old hand at the show business. At the next stand Al made as great a hit as he had made at Wyburn, the people seeming to think the turning of a double somersault over the ten animals, three of which were elephants, a wonderful feat for a boy, as indeed it was. Messrs. Thompson and Williams, the proprietors of the show, were very glad indeed that they had secured the services of the youth, but they were careful not to say too much along that line, as they were afraid the youth might get too exalted an idea of his worth and strike them for higher wages. Had they known he was an old stager it would have been different. As Al was getting ready for the evening's performance, Sam Stokes came in and approaching the youth, said:

"You had a talk with Marie Monsell last night. Did you ask her to stop using that tiger in her act?"
"Yes," Al replied. "I asked her to do so."
"And what did she say?" eagerly.

"She said that she could not stop using him in the act, as her contract called for his appearance."

A disappointed look appeared in Stokes' eyes.
"I am sorry to hear that," he said. "That
means that sooner or later she will be torn to
pieces by the beast."

"I think not, Mr. Stokes. I am going to be in the inclosure each time with her, and both of us will be more than a match for India, I guess."

The face of the man lighted up at this.
"Are you?" he cried. "I am glad of that. So long as you are with the show she will be tolerably safe, then."

At the performance that evening Al went through with his part in the acrobatic work and

in the tumbling and leaping from the springboard, and when the time came for Marie Monsell's act he appeared in the inclosure with the woman and the tigers. Mr. Williams, one of the proprietors, came out and made a little speech, stating that the large tiger had come very near killing Marie Monsell, that indeed he would have done so but for "Master Albert Wellington," who, being something of an aimal tamer himself, had leaped into the inclosure and saved the lady's life. The tiger, being a dangerous beast, it had been thought only prudent that he appear in the inclosure with Monsell. The majority had read the account of the affair in the county papers, this town being only eight or nine miles from Wyburn, and they gazed upon the youth with interest. India was in a bad humor tonight, as might have been expected, and he growled and threatened, but with Al's help he was made to go through his paces. Both he and the woman were glad when the act was ended, however, for there was an ugly look on the tiger's face. The people breathed freer, too, and were as glad as the woman and the boy were. When the next stand was reached, the town being seven or eight miles farther on, Sam Stokes was found to be missing. As he was one of the boss canvas men, he was sadly missed, and inquiries were made for him of the other employes by the proprietors of the show. The tents were gotten up in time, however, and the performances given afternoon and evening. At the next town Sam Stokes turned up and went to work as if nothing had happened. He did not say a word about having been absent, but as soon as the proprietors learned that Stokes had shown up they came to interview him.

"Hello, Stokes! Got back, have you?" remarked Mr. Williams. "Where have you been?"
"Got full back at the other town," was the short

reply; and as Stokes was a valuable man the proprietors decided to not deliver the lecture they had intended giving the man. Instead, Williams said:
"Humph! Well, don't do it again!" and both
of them withdrew, Stokes paying no attention to

anything but his work.

As is often the case with traveling shows, one of the bareback riders, "Hank" Jones by name, but known on the bills as Monsieur Jacques Le Fontaine, had under his control a boy of about eight years whom he was teaching to ride. The boy was a bright little fellow, named Harry Dale, and would have learned much more rapidly had he had someone else to teach him, for Hank Jones was a brute, who whipped the boy unmercifully if he made the slightest error, thus keeping him in a constant state of nervousness. As it happened, Jones had not done more than cuff the ears of little Harry since Al joined the show, but even that had been almost more than the youth could witness without interfering. It reminded him of his own boyhood days, when another just such a brutal taskmaster had pounded him when he did not learn to turn flip-flops as rapidly as the man thought he ought to.

On this day, however, while the canvas was being put up around the sides of the great tent, and before the time for the parade, Hank Jones put Harry Dale to work practicing. The little fellow must have been more than usually nervous, for he did not do as well as usual, falling off once or twice, and encountering great difficulty in keeping on the horse at all. with the result that the man became very angry and suddenly began whipping the boy with the whip which he always had in his hand, ostensibly to use on the horse, but the boy got the benefit of it oftener than the horse did. When Hank Jones began whipping Harry the boy was standing up on the horse, but, being startled as well as hurt, he fell to the ground, and the man kept on whipping, every stroke of the lash bringing a shriek of agony from the boy, for the whip was not a toy by any means, but a wicked thing made for the purpose of cutting the blood out of an animal if the wielder so desired.

Al Payson happened to be passing and, as the sound of the shrill cries of the boy and the swish! swish! of the whip came to his ears, he gave vent to an exclamation of anger and darted under the canvas and into the tent. His eyes took in the situation in an instant, and he leaped forward, like a panther. So angry was Hank Jones and so intent on his work of flogging the helpless boy that he did not see or hear Al, and the first intimation he had of the youth's approach was when Al caught hold of the whip as the man drew back to strike a blow and jerked the instrument of torture out of his hands.

"What do you mean by whipping the boy in such a horrible manner, you great big ugly brute!" cried Al, a dangercus look in his eyes. "You ought by rights to be tied there to the center-pole and given a dose of your cwn medicine!"

#### CHAPTER IX.—Al Defeats a Bully.

Hank Jones turned upon Al and gazed at him for a few moments in speechless astonishment and rage. Then he suddenly found his voice. "What is that?" he cried. "Do you dare to

talk to me in such a fashion, you little whipper-snapper, you? Why, I'll break you in two! I'll wring your neck! You are the most impudent young scoundrel that I ever saw!"

"And you are the biggest brute!" retorted Al

The man stared at Al a few moments in breathless astonishment at the youth's temerity, and then, quick as a flash, made a cut at Al with the whip. The youth was on the watch, however, and ducking, he avoided the stroke and, making a quick grab, secured a firm hold on the whip and jerked it out of the man's hand.

"I guess not!" he said quietly. "You are a

good hand at whipping boys, but you will find I am a shade too large for you to operate upon with success. You had best confine your attempts at castigation to small boys like Harry there, and

give boys like me the go-by."

"Curse you! I'll give you a good pounding for that!" Jones cried, and he leaped at Al like a tiger and struck out at the youth's face with all his might. Undoubtedly he thought that he would land on the youth and knock him down and out with one blow, but he was destined to meet with a surprise. Al knew the blow was coming before it started, and as Jones struck out, the youth leaped backward out of reach, and so great was the force with which Jones struck that he lurched forward and fell upon his knees. "Be careful, Mr. Jones, or you will hurt your-

self," said Al calmly, and a number of the canvase men and roustabouts who were standing near taking it all in, laughed. None of them liked Jones on account of his quarrelsome and "bossy" disposition, and the spectacle of him missing the youth and almost falling down gave them considerable pleasure

"The kid's all right, hain't he?" said one.

"Ye bet he is," from another.

"Didn't he get out uv Hank's reach nice, though?"

"Ye bet he did!"

Jones was on his feet again by this time, and he advanced upon Al with brandishing fists and a black look of rage on his face.

"You think you are smart, don't you?" he cried. "Well, I'll take all that smartness out of you in a little less than no time! I'm going to give you a good licking, even though you are a boy. Boys ought to know their places."

"And men ought to know better than to make

brutes of themselves by beating a little boy as you have just been doing!" retorted Al. "But as you don't seem to know any better, I think I shall have to take upon myself the task of teaching you

Al spoke so coolly and quietly that Jones hardly knew what to think. He had no thought that the youth could possibly be a match for him, however, and attributed Al's coolness to ignorance.

"Ha! ha! ha!" he laughed sarcastically, pausing and placing his hands on his hips while he grinned in the youth's face. "You are the funniest fellow I ever saw! Say you ought to make a hit writing stuff for the comic papers! You make me laugh; you do so!"
"Do I?" asked Al quietly.
"Yes, you do."

"All right; laugh if you want to. I'll tell you one thing, however, and that is, that if you whip that little fellow while I'm with this show I shall give you a good thrashing!"

Jones stopped laughing at this. "Well now, that does settle it!" he growled, frowning darkly. "I had about made up my mind to pay no attention to you, save to laugh at you, but when a youngster gets as fresh as you have shown yourself to be, it is time someone took him in hand and taught him a lesson. Don't try to run now, for I'm going to give you a licking. You can't get away.'

"I shall not try," coolly. "If you fool with me it will be you who will wish to get away, Mr.

Jones."

Jones turned to the men standing near. "Men," he said, "I wish you all to bear witness that this young cub insulted and threatened me, and interfered with me. I am going to give him a thrashing, and the boss will likely try to haul me over the coals, but with your testimony to the effect that the kid brought it onto himself by his freshness, I will not be blamed."

"Don't bother about that, Jones," said Al. "The boss will never attempt to haul you over the coals for anything you may do to me. The shoe is more apt to be on the other foot. You are the one who is going to get licked, and if you don't believe it, sail right in and you will soon find that this is

The same words spoken by almost anyone else would have sounded like brayado, but there was nothing of the bravado in Al's air or tones. spoke so quietly and in such a matter-of-fact way that all who heard him, even Jones himself, were

surprised and impressed. Jones suddenly remembered that Al was an acrobat, and the thought struck him that the youth was going to play some kind of an acrobatic trick upon him.

"I'll not give him any chance to do that, however," he said to himself. "I'll close right in on him and make it impossible for him to do any funny business."

"I see there is no use of talking to you," Jones "You are determined to get yourself into trouble, so the quicker I bring the affair to a head the better. Here goes for you!" and Jones suddenly leaped forward and began striking at Al with both fists as rapidly as he could.

The youth was on his guard, however, and by giving ground slightly and parrying and ducking, he managed to avoid all the blows, doing so so neatly as to bring exclamations of admiration from the spectators, some of the performers having by this time appeared on the scene.
"What is Jones up to now?" asked one. "Why is he attacking the boy?"

"The kid interfered with him when he wuz lickin' the little chap," replied one of the canvasmen. "Well, it's an outrage that he should be allowed to whip a little fellow like Harry as if hewere a dog, and then attack a boy like Al."

"I don't think you need worry about Al," said Harkins, who was one of the spectators. "Unless I am mightily mistaken, he is able to take

care of himself."

Harkins proved to be a very good prophet, for the youth remained on the defensive until Jones grew tired of thrashing the atmosphere, then when the big fellow dropped his hands to let them rest, Al took the offensive and sailed into the man in great shape, raining the blows upon him quite as rapidly as Jones had attempted to rain them upon the boy. There were lively times there for a few moments, and as Al's blows landed upon the face and body of Jones he staggered backward and threw up his hands in an awkward and vain attempt to ward the blows off. Having got his man started backward, overbalanced and rattied, Al kept up the rain of blows and then, when a good chance offered, dealt him a terrible blow on the point of the jaw, flooring Jones as if he had been struck with a sledge-hammer. It was a terrible blow, one such as none who were watching the combat had thought the youth capable of delivering, and they uttered exclamations of astonishment.

"Great Scott! What a blow!" "It was like the kick of a mule!"
"Thet wuz a sockdolager, sure enuff!"

The bareback rider was a tough fellow, and was not knocked out, even though jarred considerably by the blow and fall, and after lying a few mo-ments, blinking upward at the roof of the canvas, he rose to a sitting posture and then scrambled to his feet.

"I'll make you sorry for that, you young scoundrel!" he cried, and he rushed forward again, bent on crushing the youth by superior strength

and force.

Al would not permit himself to be cornered, however, and kept out of reach, parrying, ducking and evading the blows showered upon him, until, as in the first instance, Jones tired himself out and dropped his hands from sheer exhaustion, when Al attacked his opponent, driving him back and finally knocking him down again with a ter-

rific left-hand swing on the jaw. This blow dazed Jones, and he lay for nearly a minute unable to rise to even a sitting posture, and the spectators, none of whom seemed to like Jones, expressed their pleasure at the result of the combat.

"That was a daisy tap!"

"I'm glad he slugged Jones!"

"So am I. I have thought of interfering when he was beating the little chap there, more than once, but did not do it. Al is all right."

Stokes talked a while longer, but seemed to be this time."

This was scarcely true, for just at that moment Mr. Jones was hardly in a condition to realize anything. He rallied shortly, however, and rose to a sitting posture, rubbed his eyes and then scrambled to his feet. Instead of renewing the combat with Al, he caught little Harry Dale by the hand, said, "Come along with me," and made his way to and into the dressing-tent without even so much as a glance at Al.

"The show is over, gentlemen," remarked the outh, with a smile. "Mr. Jones has withdrawn youth, with a smile.

from the field."

"I wouldn't have thought Jones would give up in such fashion," said Harkins, "I thought he was a man of more courage than that."

"I didn't," said Al quietly. "A man who will

beat a little fellow as he has been in the habit of beating little Harry is a coward. He could not help being, for no one but a coward would do such a thing. I knew he wouldn't stand for a thrashing."

#### CHAPTER X .- Sam Stokes and Marie Monsell.

The thrashing Al had administered to Hank Jones gave the youth considerable prestige among the show people; it had a good result otherwise, too, in that the bareback rider did not beat the boy again as he had been in the habit of doing. Evidently he feared to do so. For some reason Sam Stokes seemed to take a great interest in Al, the boy acrobat, and was usually around where the youth was as much as it was possible for him to be, which was a good deal, as he was a sort of privileged character. He often engaged Al in conversation, and talked of traveling with shows in foreign countries, watching the youth the while closely. It seemed from Stokes' account that he had traveled pretty much over the world, and Al wondered sometimes if this talk was not intended to draw him out and get him to talk about him-self and where he had been. Al kept his own counsel, however, and if such was Stokes' purpose he made nothing by it, for the youth never gave the man a hint that he had traveled with shows in foreign lands. One day, a week or so after Al had given Jones the thrashing, Stokes was in the dressing-tent, talking to the youth, and he spoke

of this feat of Al's, and then said:
"You must be an unusually strong boy, Al. Let
me feel of your muscle." and he took hold of Al's arm and pressed it with his fingers. Then he slipped the sleeve of Al's shirt up, as if to see the muscles work, and as his eyes fell upon a red scar on the youth's arm just below the elbow he started, in spite of kimself, and a queer light

shone in his eyes.

"Ah! that's quite a little scar you have there." Stokes said. "What caused it?"

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"I don't know; it has always been there," re-

Stokes talked a while longer, but seemed to be thinking of something else than what he was talking about, and presently he cut the conversation short and left the dressing-tent.

"It's the boy, sure as shooting!" he muttered. "Well, well! Who would ever have thought of such a thing as that we should all come together again in this fashion? What shall I do? I don't know. I hate the man. He is a scoundrel and ungrateful; while the boy is a fine youth. I don't know what to do. I will talk the matter over with Marie, and see what she thinks about it."

That same evening he entered the dressing-tent of Marie Monsell, and she greeted Stokes with

grave kindness of manner.
"What is it, Sam?" she asked, for she knew by his looks that he wished to say something out of

the ordinary.

Stokes seated himself on a stool near where Marie was sitting and, after looking at the woman reflectively for a few moments, he said: "Marie, I've made a discovery."

The woman started and looked at Stokes quick-

ly and sharply.
"Have you?" she asked.
Stokes nodded.

"I have; and it is a wonderful discovery, too, Marie. You would never guess what it is if you were to guess till you are as old as Methuselah."

A quet smile overspread the woman's face. "Don't be too sure, Sam," she said quietly.

"You think you can guess, then?"

"I do."

"Suppose you try, then."
"Very well. You have discovered that the boy acrobat, Al, is the boy we knew years ago in Australia."

Stokes started.

"You have hit it!" he exclaimed. "You have guessed it the first time."

"I have been sure of it since the night he saved

my life, Sam."
"You have? What made you think of it at that

time?"

"I hardly know. Perhaps it was the fact that he possessed the power to control wild animals. You know that I used to teach him to do that when he was a little fellow. And his being an acrobat, too, made me think there might be something in my suspicion that he was the same child, grown up to a handsome youth. There was a look in his eyes that reminded me of the little fellow we used to know, also, and I asked him if he had ever been with a show before this one. He said that he had been with shows all his life, ever since he could remember; that he had been forced to learn to be an acrobat by a man who claimed to be his uncle and guardian, and that he had a remembrance of a woman who had taught him to centrol dogs and other animals with his eyes. He said, further, that he had escaped from the man when he was fifteen years old, in India, and that he had reached Italy, where he joined a show, with which he went through all the countries of Europe, from there to South America, and then to the United States. I was confident, then, that he was the same boy."

"And he is, Marie. I suspected it for some

reason, and today I, under pretence of looking at his muscle, slipped up his shirt-sleeve and"Found the red scar."

Stokes nodded.

"Yes, it's there," he assented. "It is the boy. There is absolutely no doubt regarding the mat-

"I knew it," the woman said. And then she looked at Sam steadily for a few moments, and

said:

"Sam, is there not some way that we can make some money out of this?"

Stokes smiled.

"I have already tried to do so, Marie," he said, "but-

"Failed?"

"Failed utterly."

"But what did you do? Where did you go?"

"I guess you know. To—"
"I have forgotten his name, I believe; no, I remember now. It was Hanover. Isn't that right?" "That's the name: Austin Hanover, and he

at Wyburn, the very town where Al joined the show." lives, as you will remember Bill Sykes said he did,

"Yes, I remember now. But what do you suppose the boy was doing at Wyburn? Do you think that he has any knowledge or suspicion of the truth?"

"I hardly think so, Marie. I am confident that

it was the result of a strange accident."
"You must be right; he would not have joined this show and left Wyburn otherwise."

"You are right about that."

"But you say you went to Hanover?" "Yes."

"When we were at Wyburn, of course."

"Yes." "Well, what did you say to him? How did you

approach him?"
"I went to his home and called on him and told. him that I was an old friend of Bill Sykes.'

"You did?"

"Yes."

"What did he say?"

"He pretended ignorance of what I was talking about."
"He did?"

"Yes. He said he did not know, and had never known anyone by the name of Bill Sykes."

"What did you do then?"

"I told him that his memory must be bad, and then I commenced talking about a boy that Bill Sykes had had with him in a show that I was with in Australia, and he cut me short with the state-ment that he had neither time nor inclination to listen to fairy tales, and ordered me out of the house."

"Well, well! He was rather nervy, wasn't he?" "I should say so! And then, when I did not obey his command, but remained and kept on talking, telling him what Bill Sykes told us on his death-bed last winter down in Texas, he got very angry and tried to throw me out.'

"He must be a rather hot-headed man."

"Yes, he is that. In fact, he is, in my opinion, a villain who would hesitate at nothing, not even murder. To tell the truth, if he had been able I think he would have murdered me then and there."

"Indeed! Well, if all Sykes said is true, and I have no doubt it is, this man, Austin Hanover, would not hesitate at any crime. What would not a man do who is capable of doing what he did?"

"Nothing but what he would do, I guess. Anyway, I was startled, and in self-defense grabbed him by the throat and began choking him. Then he began yelling murder at the top of his voice, and then I heard footsteps on the stairs, and someone jumped against the door, it being locked. I let go of Hanover's throat and ran to an open window, and just then the door was burst open and into the room leaped—who do you think?"

"I could not guess, Sam." "Al, the boy acrobat!"

#### CHAPTER XI. - Stokes and Marie Decide to Help Al.

Marie Monsell uttered an exclamation of aston-

"You don't mean it!" she cried. "How did he

happen to be there?"
"That is what I do not know. It must have been an accident; but it was a strange occurrence, to say the least."

"I should say so; but what did you do?" "I climbed through the open window I spoke of and dropped to the ground and escaped."

"Did the boy see you?" "He saw me, of course, but I don't know whether or not he saw my face. I was badly

frightened when I saw him the first day, when he joined the show. I was afraid he would recognize me, and in an excess of zeal, go and swear out a warrant for my arrest, as naturally he must have thought the man he had frightened away from the mansion of Austin Hanover was trying to murder the man."

The woman was silent, and seemed studying for several moments. Presently she looked up.

"Sam," she said, "that was before you knew where the boy was, or that he was alive, so I do not blame you for trying to make a rise out of the man Hanover. Now, however, that we know the vouth, and since I owe him my life, I wish if you are willing to do all we can to get him what is rightfully his own. What do you say, Sam?" Stokes studied a few minutes, and then said:

"I am willing, Marie. I can't say I'm stuck on that man Hanover. He is an old scoundrel, and we would never be able to make a cent out of him, anyway. He is closer than the bark on a

blackjack."

"Well, then, let's tell the boy all we know, which is a good deal, if all Sykes told us is true; what do you say?"
"I say, yes, Marie. I should like to get even with old Hanover, to tell the truth."

"Tomorrow is Sunday. That will be as good a time as any. We can invite him to go riding or walking with us, and then tell him the whole story.

"That is a good idea. We'll do it."

Then Stokes left the woman, who presently went into the ring, and, with Al in the inclosure to render her assistance in controlling India, the savage tiger, she went through her performance. Next day was Sunday, and was a lovely ance. day. Stokes hired a two-seated rig and invited Al to go riding with him.

"Marie Monsell is going," he said, "and she re-

quested that I invite you to go along, too. Don't say no, now, my boy, for I won't have it. Marie

would be terribly disappointed if you did. Come

Al saw that Stokes was in earnest, so did not

refuse.

"Very well; I will go," he said. "It is such a lovely day that I shall enjoy a ride."

"Of course you will; and Marie and myself will enjoy ourselves better if you are along. Marie has taken a liking to you, and I kinder like you, tco, my boy."

"Thank you," said Al quietly. Then he accompanied Stokes to the carriage and took a seat beside Marie on the rear seat, Stokes sitting in

front to drive.

"Jove! but Stokes is slinging it on somewhat for a roustabout, isn't he?" exclaimed Harkins, as he saw the three drive away.

"Yes," replied Burton. "But it is whispered around that he and Marie Monsell are man and wife, old man. I wonder if it is true?"

"I don't know, I am sure. I had heard the rumor, but did not credit it until today. It looks, however, as if there may be something in the rumor."

Stokes drove far out into the country, and the three were delighted. It was having season, and the smell of the new-mown hay and the beauty of everything was enjoyed hugely by the three strangely assorted people. They were in a beautiful section of country, and all were lovers of Nature, so the time passed rapidly. After three hours of riding Stokes drew up in the shade of some trees on the bank of a beautiful little stream, and then, turning around in the seat and facing the youth and the woman, Stokes looked at Al and said, impressively:

"Marie and I have brought you here for a purpose, Al, my boy. We are going to give you

a great surprise."
"Indeed!" remarked Al. What kind of a sur-

"This, my boy. We are going to tell you who you are, and all about you.

#### CHAPTER XII .- Telling Al the Story.

Al stared at Stokes in amazement.

"What!" he exclaimed, presently, in a wondering voice, "you are going to tell me who I am, and all about me?"

"Just that!" nodded Stokes.

"Yes, indeed!" coincided Marie Monsell, with

"But how can that be possible?" almost gasped Al. "How can you, whom I have never seen before I met you a short time ago on joining this show, know what I do not know myself—namely, who I am?"

"That is just at present our secret," smiled

Stokes.

"But we're going to tell you the secret, Al," the woman said. "That is what we brought you here for."

"Exactly!" nodded Stokes.

Al stared at first one, then the other. "You have me all muddled!" he said. "Who are you, and how, when and where did you learn aught of me?"

Marie Monsell turned toward Stokes. "Shall I tell him the story. Sam?" she asked.

Yes, go ahead, Marie," the man said. "You are a better talker than I am."
"Very well, then. First, Al, I will tell you what you may have heard rumored among the show people. Sam here and I are man and wife."

Al stared in surprise.

"Is that so?" he exclaimed. "No; I had not heard it rumored—probably because I have not been with the show long. Well, well! This is

quite a surprise to me!"

"We are man and wife," repeated Marie Monsell, "and have been for twenty years. We have been traveling with shows for that length of time, and have been all over the world."

"But you told me your real name was Mary Scott," said Al in surprise.

"That was before I had any idea that we should let you into the secret that we are married. Mary Scott was my maiden name."

"Twelve years ago," went on Marie, "Sam and I were with a show in Australia. With that show was a man by the name of Bill Sykes-

"The man who had control of me for so many years!" exclaimed Al, a look of repulsion appear-

ing on his handsome face.

"And with Bill Sykes was a boy of six

years-

"Myself!" said Al. The woman nodded.

"Yes, I now know you are the youth who, as a little fellow in Australia, I thought so much of," the woman said. "I used to feel sorry for you when Sykes beat you, and I wondered many times where he got hold of you, for, although he claimed that he was your uncle and guardian, I never believed it. I could not believe that the blood of such a brutal man could flow in the veins of such a handsome, good little fellow as you were."

"I am confident he was not related to me," said l. "Or, if he was, the relationship was so dis-

tant as to amount to nothing."
"He was not related to you," the woman de-"Sam and I have his own word to prove clared.

"You have?" exclaimed Al, eagerly. "Did he admit it to you at that time?"

"No; not at that time," the woman said. "He would not admit anything of the kind then."

"When, then, did he admit it?" asked Al, with

"Last winter!" was the reply.

"Where did you see him last winter?" he asked, with an anxious air.

"In Texas."

"Why, I was in Texas myself last winter," said Al, "and if I had known that Bill Sykes was in that State I should have made tracks out of it so fast that it would have made me dizzy!"

The woman smiled, and then sobered up again. "Well, you will never need to feel afraid on his account again," Marie said, quietly and soberly. "He is dead!"

"What! Dead?" exclaimed Al.

"Yes, he died in Texas last winter, and Sam and I were at his bedside when he breathed his last."

Al was silent for a few moments and then

looked up.

"Of course, it would be hypocritical in me if I were to feel much sorrow at hearing of Sykes'

death," said Al, "but I can truthfully say that I feel sorry for him. I wish that he might have lived long enough to repent of his sins.'

Al started.

"What did he tell you?" he asked, eagerly. "Anything about me?"

The woman nodded.

"Yes, indeed! All about you, Al. And it is a strange, a wonderful story, too."

Al was becoming greatly interested and excited. He gazed first at the woman and then at the man, and fairly trembled.

"And—and you will tell me what he told you?"

he asked.

"That is what we brought you here for, Al. We are going to tell you all that Sykes told us, and when we get through you will agree with us

that it is a remarkable story."
"Go on, and tell me all!" Al urged. "Ah! you. have no idea how I have longed to know who I am! It is not pleasant to be a nobody, not knowing that the name you bear is your own. Tell me, please, as quickly as possible."

me, please, as quickly as possible.
"I cannot remember to tell the story as he told "I cannot remember to tell the story as he told the it, Al," she said, "so will go ahead and tell the substance in my own way. It will amount to the

same thing.

"Tell me, if you can, first and foremost, who I am. Tell me what my name is."

"Very well, Al. Your name is not Payson, but Hanover."

The youth started and an excited look appeared

in his eyes.

Hanover!" he exclaimed. "Why, there are people of that name at Wyburn, where I joined the show! It can't be!— it is impossible that—

"That the Hanovers at Wyburn are related to you? No, it not only is not impossible, but it is a fact! You were born heir to that big mansion, standing just on the outskirts of Wyburn, my

Al stared at the woman as if dazed. He seemed scarcely to comprehend, but at last his eyes kindled and an exclamation escaped him. "Can it be possible?"

The man and woman both nodded.
"Hanover!" Al murmured. "Is it not wonderful to think of that I should have found my wal to that town? It seems as if fate had something to do with leading me to the place."

Then to Al's mind came the remembrance of having seen Sam Stokes escaping from the upstairs room of the Hanover mansion after having, as the youth supposed, tried to murder Mr. Austin Hanover, and he looked at Stokes, wonderingly. "Mr. Stokes," he said, suddenly, "what were

you trying to do that afternoon when I frightened you out of the room in the Hanover mansion, Why did you try to kill the man?"

#### CHAPTER XIII .- The Story Continued.

Stokes looked slightly confused for a moment, and then gave vent to a half-forced laugh.

"I did not try to kill him," he said.

Al looked at the man in a doubting manner.

"You did not?" he asked.

Sam Stokes pondered for a few moments. "You might as well tell him the whole story, Sam," said Marie Monsell, quietly.

Sam Stokes pondered again for a few moments

and then began:

"I did choke that man, Al, but I did it in selfdefense. I knew his secret and went up there to see if I could not get some money out of him, but failed, and not only that, but he threatened to throw me out if I did not get away in a hurry. As I did not go quite as fast as he liked, or thought I should, he attacked me, and I simply defended myself, choking him till he was glad to let go of me. He managed to yell, 'Murder!' once or twice, however, and you heard him and came to his aid. I should have gone anyway when I did, had you not come; so your coming really did

"So that was it, was it?" remarked Al. "But how did you expect to get money out of him?"

"Well, as I said, I knew his secret, and I went to him and tried to frighten him into giving me some money, but he wouldn't scare worth a cent."
"Go ahead and tell Al the secret of his birth,

Sam," said Marie.

"No: you do it, Marie," said Sam. "You are better at talking that I am. Tell him the story

just as Bill Sykes told it to us."

"Very well, I will do so. To begin with, then, your name is, as I said awhile ago, Albert Hanover. Your father was Austin Hanover's half-brother, Austin, as he had no other relatives, and

made him your guardian."

"Well, well! That is a strange story," said Al, as the woman paused. "But how came I to be traveling about the world with circuses, and with Bill Sykes claiming to be my uncle and guar-dian?"

"I will come to that presently. Your father, Al, was very wealthy. He left stocks, bonds and real estate in New York City, and property in different parts of the State to the value of two or three million dollars. Of course he left the bulk of his great fortune to you, his son, leaving his halfbrother about one hundred thousand dollars to pay him for taking care of you."

"That seems quite liberal," said Al.

"But Austin Hanover did not think so. He coveted the entire fortune, and began scheming to get it into his hands. He studied for a long time and finally worked out a plan. He had a family of his own, consisting of a wife, son two years old and an infant daughter, and taking you and his family, together with all the papers, including the will, records of your birth and so forth, he went off up to Wyburn, to the mansion where he now

"Ah!" breathed Al, "I begin to have an inkling

of what he was up to."

"In Austin Hanover's employ was a man, a sort of confidential servant. He had been with Austin for years and, if the truth were known, I think he had been employed in many shady transactions, his master keeping in the background. He the same as said so—for this servant was Bill Sykes, Al, your old taskmaster!"

"I begin to understand," said Al.
"I judge that you do. Well, not long after going to the mansion in Wyburn—this is Sykes' story to Sam and myself, you understand-Austin Hanover made a proposition to Sykes, nothing less in fact than that he should take you and leave the country, with the intention that you should never, if you lived, return to the United

States. In order that he might have an excuse for sending you away, Hanover pretended that you were ill, and sent to New York ostensibly for a doctor; instead, he sent for an old crony of his, who was not a doctor at all, but who came on to Wyburn, wearing a plug hat and spectacles, and remained at the mansion several weeks, posing as a doctor and ostensibly attending on you, and at the end of that time he returned to New York. first recommending a sea voyage for you. If you remained in Wyburn you would, he said, surely die. This, of course, was what Austin Hanover had been scheming to bring about, and a couple of weeks later Sykes left Wyburn for good and all, taking you with him. Sykes had been instructed to take you to some foreign country, wait a few weeks and then report that you had died, and this he did. He took you to Australia, as he had lived there once, and, after having reported you dead, he adopted you, calling himself your uncle and finally, four years later, he joined a circus. He had once traveled with a circus, and he went back into the profession and began to try to teach you to become a show actor. He taught you little feats in acrobatic work, and about this time Sam and I became members of the same show. It was then that we first knew you, and I taught you how to control dogs by simply looking at them. You were then six years old. We were with the same show that Bill traveled with for two seasons and learned to think a great deal of you. Of course we did not then know you were nothing to Sykes, but we did think that you must be very distantly related, if at all. I used to interfere ofter, too, to keep Sykes from beating you, for he was a brutal fellow. The next season, however, we went with a different show, and that was the last time we saw you until the day you joined this show at Wyburn."

Al had listened, as was natural, with close attention and great interest, and when the woman got through he asked:

"Did Sykes tell you all this down in Texas last winter?"

The woman nodded.
"Yes," she replied; "and not only that, but he had us take it down in black and white, and signed it; so we have full proof that you are Albert Hanover and the heir to that great fortune which is now being enjoyed by Austin Hanover, your half-uncle."

"You said something about his having told you where valuable papers were hidden," said Al.

"Yes," the woman replied; "he told us about the papers. He said he saw the papers hidden, although Austin Hanover was not aware of the

"And where were they hidden?"
"In a secret hiding-place in the attic, behind a sliding panel Austin Hanover hid them there, I suppose, because he was for some reason afraid to burn them. It would have been better for him if he had done the latter, for it will be a bad thing for him. It will enable us to throw him out and return you to your rightful place as the heir to and owner of the Hanover fortune."

## CHAPTER XIV .- A Triple Alliance.

Al was silent for some little time, studying. "It is pretty hard to decide upon a plan of procedure," he said, "but I think there is one thing that is self-evident. If I am to secure those papers I must go where they are."
"There is no doubt about that," assented

"That proposition cannot be disputed," from

Marie Monsell.

"This being true," continued Al, "it is the same as settled that I must return to Wyburn."
"Yes, that is the thing to do," nodded Stokes.
"And you will wish Sam and I to go with you?"

asked Marie.

"Yes; so that you will be at hand when needed. If you go to Wyburn, however, Sam will have to keep in the background, or Austin Hanover will

e him and suspect something."
"That's a fact," assented Stokes. "I can do that easy enough, though; in fact, our work will be done at night. We will have to do some bur-glar work, Al."

"Yes, but I think there will be nothing wrong

or criminal in thus entering my own house, Mr. Stokes. I am going to do it to enable me to regain what is really my own, and to defeat the schemes of a scoundrel."

"That is true enough, but if Hanover should catch us at the work, he would have us in jail before we know what was taking place, so we shall have to be careful."

"Of course; we will not be caught, if we can help it. By the way, have you Sykes' confession with you?"

"Yes, I brought it along on purpose," replied Marie, and she handed a paper to Al, who unfolded the document and read it with interest.

"This is a valuable paper," he said. "Be sure and keep it in a safe place."

"You may take charge of it yourself, if you

like," said Sam. "It is yours."
"Thank you! I will do so," and, folding the paper, Al placed it carefully in the inside pocket of his coat.

Then the youth was silent for a few minutes, during which time he gazed down at the ground,

and then he looked up and said:

"I think I had better return to Wyburn a day or two ahead of you two, as we will not wish anybody there to know we are working together; then, after I have been there a day or two, you two can come in. What will you do, board at a hotel, or rent a little cottage?"

"I guess I will rent a cottage," said Sam. "You see, if I work with you at night, I will have to come and go at almost all hours, and the hotel people would soon get onto that and suspect me of being a burglar or criminal of some kind. can come and go from a cottage of my own at my pleasure, and none will be the wiser."
"I think that will be best," assented Al. "And

now the question is, when shall we leave the

"Our contract expires the last of the week," said Sam. "I don't just like Williams and Thompson, but I do not feel like quitting them before our time is out. The time is so short, anyway. I think Marie and I will remain with the show through next week. You, however, can quit whenever you like. You really have no contract with them, have you?"

"None calling for a specified season. could discharge me at any time, if they wished, and I can quit if I wish."

"So I supposed. two sooner?" Then you will quit a day or

"I should think so," assented Stokes, "but—Great Scott! 'speak of the Old Fellow!' If there don't come Austin Hanover down the road I'm a liar! Now what in the world is he doing here?"

"Hard telling!" replied Al, in a low voice.
"Won't he suspect something if he sees and recognizes us? Can't we drive on before he does recognize us?"

"No; he's too close. We will have to brass it out."

And, indeed, Stokes had told the truth; Austin Hanover was approaching—was almost opposite the three, in fact—in a buggy, to which were attached a team of matched bays. He was alone, and as he came opposite he pulled up his horses and, looking straight at Stokes with a look and air as if he had never seen the man before,

asked:
"Will you kindly tell me how far it is to Marvin, and also inform me as to whether or not I am on the right road to reach that village?"

"It is about seven miles to Marvin, I judge, sir," replied Stokes, coolly, pretending not to recognize Hanover; "and you are on the right road."

"Ah, glad to hear it. Thank you!" and with a sharp glance at Al and Marie the man drove

"Now what can he want in this part of the country?" asked Stokes.

"That is what I should like to know?" said

"It is hard to say," said Al. "It is likely, however, that he has property interests in Marvin, and is going there to look after them."
"You don't suppose he is after me, do you?"

asked Stokes, his face paling slightly.

"I hardly think so," the youth replied. "Still, such might be the case. What are you going to do, risk it and go back?"

"Yes," said Stokes, doggedly. "Let him have

me arrested, if he wants to; he will wish he had not done so before he gets through with it."

"I don't think he is here for that purpose at all," said Marie. "If he had wished to have you arrested he would have done so before you left Wyburn that day."
"I think so," coincided Al. "He is here on

private business and did not expect to run across

you, in all probability."
"I think so myself," said Stokes. "Well, what do you say to returning to Marvin? We understand each other thoroughly."

"I am ready," said Al. "And I," from Marie.

Stokes started the horses at once, and after a roundabout drive of a couple of hours reached the town. When they reached the hotel Austin Hanover was seated upon the piazza. A quiet-looking man sat near him, and as the three stepped upon the piazza Hanover pointed to Stokes and, addressing the man beside him, said, sternly:

"Arrest that man! He tried to murder me in my own home at Wyburn a short time ago!"

#### CHAPTER XV.—Al Gives Notice.

The man leaped to his feet and started to confront Stokes, but the latter did not fancy being

deprived of his liberty, and, with a cry of defiance he leaped off the piazza and ran around the corner. So quick and unexpected had been his action that the dectective—for such the man was—was taken entirely by surprise, and before ne could recover from his astonishment and make a move Stokes had gotten a good start. The detective leaped down the piazza steps and ran around the corner, only to find that his man had disappeared from view. There was an alley at he rear of the hotel and, thinking his man had gone up this alley, the detective ran to it and made a hasty observation. Again he was doomed to disappointment; the fugitive was not in sight. The detective, anxious to do his duty and earn the extra fee Hanover promised him if he succeeded, tried hard to find Stokes, but could not and was forced finally to give it up and confess himself beaten. Marie Monsell had stepped to the end of the piazza and looked down, and when she saw that her husband had escaped for the time being, she entered the hotel and went to her room.

"Sam will be able to look out for himself, I

guess," she said to herself.

As the woman entered the hotel, Al started to

follow, but the man, Hanover, called to him:
"Ah, my young friend, I am glad to see you,"
he said. "You are, I believe, the youth who came
to my rescue that day in my home in Wyburn, when that fellow, Stokes I believe his name is, tried to murder me."

Al nodded coldly.
"Yes," he replied.
The man looked at the youth searchingly, as if trying to see if he could recognize any resemblance to any one he had ever known, and then asked:

"Do you like the show business?"
"Fairly well," was the cold reply.
"Did you, ah—did you ever go with a show before this one?"

"Yes," was the reply.

The man started and looked slightly eager. "When?" he asked.

"Last winter, down in Texas."
"Oh!" the man looked relieved.

"Good day!" said Al, and he entered the hotel, Hanover making no effort to stop him this time. After supper that evening Al saw Marie in the

parlor. "I have seen Sam," she said, in a low, cautious

"Have you? Where?" asked Al.

"In the hall awhile ago. One of the men is a friend of Sam's and let him come into his room."

"Ah! What is he going to do?"
"He is going to lay low until we get to the next town. He does not think any effort will be made to arrest him after we leave here. It is his opinion that Hanover just happened to see him and the thought of having him arrested was suggested in this manner."

"I think so myself," said Al. "I do not think he will be in danger of arrest after he gets away

from this place."

"Nor do I. He is going on to the next town on the regular train. He is afraid that if he tries to get on the show-train he will be arrested, as likely the detectives will watch for him in the expectation that he will try to do that very thing."

"That is the best scheme—going on to the next town on the regular train," said Al.
"Yes, I think so. By the way, when are you

going to serve notice on the owners of the show?" "Tomorrow."

"That is right. It will give them a week to get someone to take your place."
"Yes; when will Sam and yourself give them notice?"
"Tomorrow or next day."

Stokes turned up, smiling and unruffled, at the next town next day and went about his duties unconcernedly. He kept his eyes open, however, as he thought it possible the detective might have followed the show to this place. That afternoon, while getting ready for his act, Mr. Williams, one of the owners of the show, happened to enter the dressing-tent and Al told him that he was going to quit on the coming Saturday night, after the performance.
"But what's the trouble. Aren't you getting a

good salary?"

"Yes," replied Al; "I have no fault to find with that. You are paying me as good a salary as one can expect to receive for the work I am doing. I am tired of the work, that is all, and wish to quit and rest up.'

"But you have been with us only a few weeks." "I know that. I'm tired, though, just the

same."

"Oh, come now, Al, can't you stay the season out with us?" Mr. Williams pleaded. "You are a good performer, and it will be difficult for us to replace you."

"Oh, I guess you will be able to get a man to take my place," said Al. "You have a week to do it in and we are close to New York. There are lots of acrobats there out of engagement who will jump at the chance."

Mr. Williams was considerably exercised, and hastened away to acquaint his partner, Mr. Thompson, with the news, and presently both re-

turned to the dressing-room.

"What's this I hear?" Mr. Thompson asked.

"Surely you are not going to leave us?"

"Yes," replied Al. "I hate to do so, but must do so. I shall quit Saturday night, after the performance.'

"Well, that settles it, then," said Mr. Thompson. "We had better write to New York for another acrobat at once, Williams."

"So we must."

Then the two left the dressing-room looking

rather down in the mouth.

"Say, Al, what are you up to, anyway?" asked Harkins, when the proprietors had gone. "You are not going to quit us sure enough?"

"Yes," the youth replied. "I'm tired of the work and am going to quit."

"What did you begin for, then? You have been at it ony a few weeks."

"I know. The show came along and I got a touch of the ald force are long and I got a

touch of the old fever-you know how it is. couldn't resist the temptation to try it again, though I felt at the time that I should soon be tired of it."

"Then it is true what I suspected-that you, have traveled with shows before this one?"

Al smiled.
"Yes, it is true," he assented. "I have gone with shows before, lots of them. In fact, I have traveled with shows all my life, since before Is

can remember, and have been in nearly every country in the world. So, you see, being a veteran, I am entitled to a rest."

"I knew it," said Harkins, triumphantly. "I knew you were an old hand from the first."

#### CHAPTER XVI.—An Angry Elephant.

When Marie Monsell and Sam Stokes gave Messrs. Williams and Thompson notice that they were going to quit on the coming Saturday evening the two worthy gentlemen nearly had a fit. To lose the three was going to be quite a serious loss and would make a hole in the list of acts, as Marie Monsell's trained animal act was a winning The proprietors tried to persuade Marie Monsell and Sam Stokes to remain with the show throughout the season, but could not prevail upon them to do so, and the upshot was that they had to go to work and try to get attractions to take the places left vacant by Al and Marie.

The show worked along and by Friday had reached a town called Rawlings. The town was not far from Albany and was a place of about four thousand population. A good crowd was out at the afternoon performance and everything bade fair for a good crowd at the evening per-There was trouble brewing, however. formance. The big elephant, Bolivar, had been getting crankier and crankier for a week or more, and he had trumpeted around and acted very mean at the afternoon performance—so mean, in fact, that his keeper went to the proprietors and told them he did not think it would be safe to bring Bolivar into the ring at the evening's performance. The sight of the lights angered the big fellow and he was always more or less unruly. The proprietors would not listen to the man, however.

The elephant keeper went to Al and told him that the elephant was likely to give trouble and warned him to look out when it came time to turn the double somersault over the animal. Al thanked the man for the warning and told him he would be careful. The performance went smoothly that evening. The tent was crowded and the people seemed to enjoy the performance hugely. It went smoothly until the time came for the turning of somersaults over the animals, and as soon as the big elephant was brought into the ring it became evident that he was very angry. He trumpeted and would not stand still, although the keeper yelled at him and jabbed him with the iron spear, and every minute he became more and more unmanageable until Al told the keeper he had better

take Bolivar back to the menagerie tent. The keeper started to do so, but found he could not control the elephant, which suddenly broke away from him and began fighting the two smaller elephants and the horses and camels. animals became terribly frightened and ran hither and thither, finally escaping from the ring and running toward the grand entrance. Meanwhile a panic had started in the great tent. The people had become frightened and were stampeding as fast as they could, and in the rush many were knocked down and trampled upon. Each and every one expected that the elephant would come charging out of the ring into the crowd at any moment, in which event hundreds would be killed. Bolivar, having chased the small elephants, camels and horses out of the ring, bellowed his satisfaction and whirled around and around in his clumsy fashion, as if dancing in glee, and then he stopped and stared at the shricking, fleeing people with little, beady eyes that glittered viciously. What could all these pigmies be skurrying so for? Bolivar seemed to ponder over this question and then he suddenly bethought himself that it was incumbent upon him to aid in clearing the tent. Instantly he started to leave the ring, only to find himself confronted by an insolent little pigmy with a whip in one hand and the cruel iron spear in the other.

The pigmy was Al, the boy acrobat, and he had run down the board track leading to the springboard and seized the ringmaster's whip and the elephant keeper's spear, with the intention of controlling the elephant and making him keep within the ring, if possible to do so.

Al faced the big elephant fearlessly and stared

up at Bolivar, and he, surprised at the temerity of the youth, stared down at him. Only for a few moments, however, and then he made a move to leave the ring, only to be met with a cut from the lash of the whip, the lash cutting Bolivar across his

trunk and bringing an angry bellow from him.

"Back!" cried Al, in a tone of fierce command.

"Back, Bolivar! You shall not come out!"

Bolivar trumpeted and started to come out any-

way, but Al cut him over the trunk with the whip and yelled at him and the great beast changed his mind and turned back once more. Still eager to get out of the ring, he ran back to the other side, but was again confronted by Al, who threatened Bolivar with whip and spear, and the big beast was afraid to try to go past the determined youth. The shrieks and cries of the frightened multitude were sounding in Al's ears, and, without turning his head, he cried out in a loud, clear

"There is no need of being frightened. Remain seated, everybody, I can control the elephant. Stop trying to get out of the tent."

Several of the actors and employees of the show, seeing that Al spoke truly and that he was keeping the elephant back, began yelling to the people to sit down and stop struggling, and presently the stampede was stopped.

"Tell the keeper to come here!" cried Al, and presently the elephant's keeper put in an appearance. He was trembling and frightened, but when he saw that Al was keeping Bolivar at bay he plucked up courage and, accepting the spear, went at the elephant so fiercely, being angry that he had allowed Bolivar to frighten him, that the beast gave in and obeyed his keeper with all the docility of the tamest of elephants. With Al's help, Bolivar was gotten out of the tent and into the menagerie tent, where, among the other animals, he became quiet once more, but to make safety assured, the keeper chained the elephant's feet together. Then Al returned to the tent and greeted by cheers. Mr. Williams came out and made a speech, telling the people who Al was and spoke of him as a great hero and wild animal tamer, and told about him having saved the life of Marie Monsell, the lady tiger tamer, only a few weeks before.

Al blushed and finally, to escape being further embarrassed, ran up the boardway, and then, running down, leaped upon the springboard and turned a double somersault. The people cheered

him to the echo, and he repeated the feat and

then ran to the dressing-tent.

The performance went on now as if nothing had happened, and when Al appeared in the inclosure with Marie Monsell in her act he received an ovation.

#### CHAPTER XVII .- The Return to Wyburn.

The performance went off smoothly, what there was left to be gone through with, and the people went home satisfied; they had gotten their money's worth for once. Luckily nobody had been badly injured during the stampede, after Bolivar got rampant, and before Al made him behave himself. A few had been knocked down and bruised slightly, but nothing at all serious. next stand was at Wolcott, and this was to be the last day that Al, Marie and Sam Stokes would be with the show. The afternoon and evening performance went off without a hitch, and next day the three bade good-by to their friends among the showmen and took the train for Wy-

The train reached Wyburn at ten o'clock that night, and the three went to the leading hotel. Next morning Marie went out to look for a cottage, and Al, after dressing himself carefully, made his way to the home of Dick and Mabel Hardy. He was shown into the parlor by the maid and he had been there only a short time when

Dick came in with a rush.

"Al! Al Payson! Is it you, old man, back here so soon? Great guns, but I'm glad to see you, old man, and Mabel will be tickled half to death-though don't you tell her I said so! Shake, old man! How are you, anyway?"

"I'm all right and fine as a fiddle, Dick," replied Al, shaking hands with Dick heartily. "How are you and how is Mabel?"

"I am, all right, Al, and so is sis. Say, old man, have you come back to stay with us permanently?"

"Maybe so, Dick. I thought I ought to come back and finish giving you that course of sparring

"Good enough! I'm ready to take them, you

t. But say—ah, here's sis now!"

Mabel Hardy entered the room at this moment and when she saw Al an exclamation escaped her. "Al, you here?" she cried.

"Yes, he's here; can't you see him, sis? Say, kiss him, now, that's a good girl. Maybe if we'll be real good to him he'll stay in Wyburn—eh,

"Well, it wouldn't do any harm to try me, any-

way," he smiled.

But Mabel laughed—a musical, rippling laugh

it was, too.

"Dick is a very bad boy. I have hard work keeping him within reasonable bounds. Don't pay any attention to him, Al—Mr. Payson."

"Call me Al, please, and if you do not object I will call you Mabel."

"Very well, Al," replied Mabel, with a pretty ush. "But have you left the show for good?" "Yes, I have left the show for good, Mabel. I hlush.

got tired of it and thought I would return to Wyburn. I think I shall remain permanently."

"Say, I'm awfully glad to hear that, old man!" cried Dick, "and so is sis, but, of course, she won't say so"

"Dick, I will pull your ears for you directly if you don't stop talking so much," threatened Mabel.

"Well, I hope Dick is telling the truth, Mabel,"

The three talked and laughed and Al told the two his adventures and experiences since leaving Wyburn with the show—all save the secret of who he was, and finally, after an hour of conversation, Dick got Al to go to the gymnasium with him to give him a lesson in sparring. They donned the gloves and for half an hour or so they sparred at a lively rate, and Dick proved himself an apt pupil. Then they stopped to rest up a bit and Al surprised Dick by telling him the story of his life. To say that Dick was astonished is stating it very mildly. He was nearly paralyzed with astonishment and sat there and stared at Al with eyes that stuck out like visual horns. Finally he got his breath, however, and gasped:

"Al, you—don't—mean—to say—that—your name is—Hanover, and that—you—are—the— real—heir—and—owner—of—the—Hanover

-mansion!" Al nodded.

"Dick, I do mean to say that very thing," he said. "And here is one paper that proves it," and he held up the Sykes confession, which he had drawn from his pocket.

"Let me read that, Al," said Dick. "All right, go ahead, my boy," smiled Al. "I don't wonder that it seems strange to you. It did to me at first, and it has not entirely stopped

seeming that way to me yet."

Dick took the confession, unfolded it, and read it with more interest than if it had been a thrilling story. When he had read it all he folded it

up slowly and handed it back with a long breath.
"It's all right, Al," he said. "It's all there, just as you said. Jove, but it seems wonderful when you come to think about it. Isn't it strange that you should have come to the very town where your possessions are located?"

"Yes, that was a strange happening, Dick, and it was entirely by chance, as I had no suspicion

of such a thing when I came here."

"Well, well. And to think that you are the heir to an estate worth three million dollars. Al, the whole thing seems like a leaf out of the Arabian

"So it does, but it is a fact just the same."

"And you say there are other valuable papers,

"Yes, in a secret hiding-place up in the attic." "And you are going to try to secure them?"

"I am, Dick."

"Good boy! That's the way to talk. But how are you going to work it?"

"I am going to do the burglar act, Dick." "Going to enter the house at night, eh, and by stealth?"

"I am."

"Good enough! And, Al, I'm going to help you. Together we'll get those papers or know the reason why."

#### CHAPTER XVIII .- Ready to Begin Work.

"Much obliged, Dick," replied Al, when Dick Hardy said he would help try to secure the papers from the Hanover mansion; "I shall be glad of your aid, but there will be considerable risk attached to the affair and I don't want you to get

into any trouble on my account."

"Oh, I'm not afraid," said Dick, his eyes sparkling. "I shall be glad of the chance to have an adventure. You are entering your own house when you enter the Hanover mansion, and if you wish me to go with you, I have a right to do so."
"Yes, but I have first to prove this, Dick. And

I need the papers that are hidden in the mansion to help me prove it. Until I secure those papers, I shall not be ready to set up a claim, and will be in as much danger, from entering the mansion, as a stranger would be in. Don't you think you had better keep out, Dick?"

"No; don't ask me to do that, Al," said Dick. "Nothing in the world could give me more pleasure than to get to help you in this affair. And maybe I can help you a lot-be of considerable

service to you."

"I haven't the least doubt of that, Dick. I have a friend, as I was telling you-Sam Stokes-who is going to aid me, but three of us would be better than two, as two of us could enter the building, while one remained outside and gave the alarm in case of danger."
"That's it, Al!" cried Dick eagerly. "I can be

of service to you, I know. Its settled, then? I'm to be in on this and help you?"
"Yes," replied Al; "you may go into it and help me out, Dick. I hope you won't get into any trouble on account of your action and I don't think you will, as we will be careful and take no chances."

"Sure. Of course we'll be careful, Al, as to be caught might result in spoiling everything."

"How are you going to go to work, Al? Have you formulated any plans?"

"Only in a general way, Dick. We are going to enter the mansion at night and search for the papers, that is all."

"And when are you going to begin?"

"Oh, at once; tonight. I don't want to wait any longer than I can help, as my estimable halfuncle might take it into his head to destroy the papers."

"So he might, and that would be terrible,

wouldn't it?"

"It would, indeed. So you see the necessity for prompt action."

"I do. And you are going to try to enter the mansion tonight?"

"Good! I'll be with you. At what hour will you make the attempt?"

"Not until late in the night-or, rather, early in the morning. At about two o'clock. Everybody is sleeping soundly by that time."

"Yes, unless they possess extraordinarily bad

consciences."

"Well, my half-uncle ought to have a bad conscience. It may be, however, that he has no conscience at all."

"That is the most likely thing. I should think that no man who possessed a conscience could have treated a child left in his care as he treated

"It would look that way. Well, we shall have to be very careful and look out for people who

lie awake, tormented by bad consciences."
"That's right. Well, I'll be with you tonight.
Where shall I be and at what time?"

"I'll tell you," said Al. "Your house here is where we will have to pass on the way to the mansion and you can be down at the corner by the stone wall. Be there at about half-past o'clock. If you are not there when we get there we will wait for you, and if we are not there, you wait for us."

"All right, Al. I'll be there, you may be sure.

I wouldn't miss it for a farm."

"All right. Well, that being settled, shall we have another round or two with the gloves?"

"Sure. I want to become as good a boxer as you are, Al, if such a thing is possible, so that when I get into a scrap I will be able to give the other fellow all that's coming to him."

Al laughed.

"At the rate you have progressed since the first lesson I gave you I guess there won't be much difficulty in your doing that from now on, Dick."

"I hope not."

The youths put on the gloves and went at it, and Al gave Dick some lessons in ducking and side-stepping, with blows to be used on conjunc-When they had sparred another half an hour they sat down and rested and talked, and then went downstairs to the parlor, where Mabel was seated at the piano playing and singing. Al joined in the singing, and an enjoyable hour was spent, when, it being near the noon hour. Al took his departure, being pressed to call often. Al returned to the hotel and found Sam and Marie there. Marie had been out looking at cottages, and had found one which suited her nicely.

"I am going to have the furniture placed in the cottage this afternoon," she said to Al, "and by using rags instead of carpets we can get in this evening. I think I shall like it here very much."
"I think so,' said Al. "This is a beautiful vil-

lage; just the place to live in quietly and hap-pily."

"Indeed, yes. It seems like a perfect haven of rest, after the long years of wearying rush and worry of constant travel, as has been our por-

tion."

"I know how it goes," said Al, with a sad smile.
"You know what my life has been and I can truthfully say that the most happy weeks of my life were the three weeks that I spent here in this village before the circus came along. What-ever possessed me to join it and start out on the road again is one of those mysteries which it seems impossible of fathoming, but to my mind, in

view of the results, it seems to have been Fate."
"It looks that way," coincided Marie. "If you had not taken the notion and joined the show you

might not, in all probability would not, have ever known the story of your life."

"True. Well, I am glad I did join the show."

Al spent the afternoon aiding Marie in getting the furniture selected and into the cottage, for he wished to get the couple installed there as cuickly as possible, so that Austin Hanover would not be so likely to see and recognize them."

"This will make you a nice little home," said Al.

"You have a nice view from here."

"Yes, indeed. And there is a lovely flower garden at the rear. Oh, I have so longed to some time have a little home of my own, where I could get out and breathe the pure, fresh air of the early morning and have flowers and plants."
"You certainly can have them here," said Al.

"Oh, yes, and I am going to have them, too."

When the furniture, rugs, etc., were all in place Marie went down to the grocery store and ordered some groceries and when she returned she invited Al to take supper with them.

"I am a good cook, Al," she said. "I learned that years ago, when I was not a star, and it will

be of benefit to me now."
"So it will," assented Al, "and I shall be glad

to accept your kind invitation."
"And I shall be glad to have you accept it. Well, it is getting along toward evening, so I will get to work. You come when Sam does."
"Very well," and Al went to the hotel and to

Sam's room, where they talked the matter over, discussing the ways and means of getting into

the Hanover mansion and securing the papers.

A little later they left the hotel, first paying their scores, and made their way to the cottage, where they found a splendid supper awaiting them and which all enjoyed hugely.

"Al is going to stay here with us till he is ready to take his place in his own home, Marie,"

said Sam, and Marie said:
"I shall be glad to have him stay here, Sam.
There is plenty of room."

"And I shall be glad to stay," said Al. "I will feel more at home here than at a hotel, and then, as Sam and I are working together, and at night, it will be better for us to be together."
"Yes, it will make it better," said Sam. "We

"We are going to have help, Sam," said Al, and then he told about Dick Hardy.

"That is all right, if he is a bright, discreet boy," said Sam. "Three will be better than two."

"Yes, indeed," said Al. "He is a bright, brave and discreet boy and will be a big help to us."

"All right. I'm glad he is to be along, Al."

Sam and Al lay down at shout nine states and

Sam and Al lay down at about nine o'clock and slept till midnight, when they were awakened by an alarm clock. They made all necessary prepa-rations, and then, bidding Marie good-by, sallied out into the night and darkness at one o'clock. As he had promised, Dick was at the corner, and the three then made their way at a rapid walk in the direction of the Hanover mansion. Ten minutes later they stood on the lawn, under the dense shadows of the trees, and looked up at the man-

"There it is," said Stokes, in a whisper. "There

is your home, Al."
"Yes, there it is," assented Al. "It is, I feel sure, my rightful home, but I've got to do something to get it. Our work is all cut out for us."

#### CHAPTER XIX .- The Finding of the Papers.

"You are right," assented Stokes. "Well, how are you going to work it, Al? Who is going to go into the house and who stay outside?"

"You had better stay outside, Sam," said Al. "Dick and I will go in, as we are younger and spryer than you and can climb around better. You stay here and keep watch, and if you see anything suspicious. blow your whistle and we will get out in a hurry."

"All right, Al. Well, here's the tools. Take

'em and get to work."

The tools in question were a small hand crowbar and a glass cutter, and, taking them, Al stole toward the mansion, followed by Dick. They soon reached the building and, selecting a window, began work. Al inserted the sharp end of the crowbar under the window frame and pried upward. The spring at the top of the sash held firmly for a while, but as Al increased the pressure the strain proved to be too much for it and the catch gave way.

"There!" exclaimed Al, in a whisper. "Now I guess we will have plain sailing. I'll get in first,

Dick, and you can follow."

"All right," was the whispered reply, and then Al pushed the sash up, placed the end of the crowbar against it and, giving the other end to Dick with instructions to hold the sash from coming down, he leaped up onto the window-sill and climbed gently and silently through into the room beyond. Then he took the crowbar and arranged it as a prop for the window, after which he aided Dick to enter. The youths stood perfectly still and listened for a few moments before making any move, to see whether or not their entrance had awakened anyone; then, hearing nothing, Al opened the slide of the dark-lantern he had brought along and flashed the light around. He soon located the door and, moving forward, tried the knob. The door was not locked and, opening it, Al stuck his head through and found, to his satisfaction, that the door opened into the hall.

way, Dick," he whispered, and he stepped through into the hall, followed by the

other youth.

A staircase led to the next door, and the two made their way upstairs, treading as softly as though on eggs. Al wished to reach the attic, but not knowing where to look for the attic stairs, the only thing to do was to search for them. This he perceeded to do and, after reaching the next floor, he tried the doors, one after another, and finally found the right one.

"Here it is," Al whispered; "come along, Dick. We'll have those papers before an hour has passed or know the reason why."

"I'm right at your heels, old man," was the whispered reply. "Up we go."

And up they did go, Al taking the precaution to close the attic door behind them. When they reached the attic they paused and as Al flashed the light around his heart sank. The attic was a mammoth affair, and as he gazed around at the walls the needle in the haystack simile flashed into his mind. How was he ever to find the panel behind which, according to the story of Bill Sykes, the papers had been hidden?
"Great Scott, Dick," he said, in a guarded tone,

"how are we going to find the papers in this big place?"

"I give it up, Al. It is going to be a job, isn't it?"

"It surely is unless the blind goddess, Luck, favors us and we happen onto the hiding-place of the papers."

"Perhaps we shall do so, old man. We can try,

anyway."

"So we can, but it looks to me as if we had better go back and get provisions and bring them up here—enough to last us a week or two. We would be lucky to find the papers in that time, so it seems to me."

"Oh, I don't know, Al; I think we can pretty well around the walls tonight. Then, if we don't succeed, we can come back tomorrow night."

"So we can. Well, let's get to work. Let's com-

mence right here by this beam. You go one way and I'll go the other."

"All right. How are we to know the panel when we find it, Al?"

"That is hard to say. Doubtless it will be loose or will slip back. I guess we will know it when we find it."

"Maybe so. I hope so."

"So do I."

Then the youths began their work and one went to the right, the other to the left. They thumped lightly on the panels one at a time, pushed at them, tried to shove them to one side—tested them in every way they could think of and gradually they moved away from each other. The panels were about six inches wide and fitted closely to-gether, so closely, in fact, that they were quite tight and did not shake or rattle when thumped and pushed upon. The youths worked away for it seemed to them an hour at least, but it had in reality been only about half that length of time. In that time they had tested at least a hundred panels and were but getting fairly started on the task before them.

"Say, Al, this is monotonous, isn't it?" said

Dick, in a guarded tone.

"It certainly is," was the reply, and then both youths stopped and drew long breaths and looked around at the long stretch of walls with looks of dismay on their faces.

"Sam'll get tired of waiting, won't he?" smiled Dick. "He'll think we have been gobbled up."
"I expect I had better slip down and tell him what we are up against," said Al. "What do you think?"

"I think you had better do so."
"All right, I will do so. You won't be afraid to stay here in the dark, will you?"

"Oh, no, go along."

Al left the attic and stole down the stairs. He was gone quite a while and when he returned he said:

"Sam was getting nervous, but now that he knows what is delaying us it will be all right."

"You didn't hear anyone stirring in the house, did you, Al?"

"No, but I stumbled as I was coming upstairs and made considerable noise. I was afraid might have aroused someone, but listened and did not hear anyone stirring. I guess I didn't awaken anyone."

"I hope not."

The youths returned to the work of testing the panels and worked steadily for another half hour, when suddenly an exclamation escaped Dick.
"Come here, Al," he called guardedly. "I have

found a loose panel."

Al hastened to Dick's side and examined and tested the panel. It was loose, as Dick had said, and the youth began working at it. He pushed at it and tried to work it sideways, but it refused to be moved. Finally, however, he pushed upward and the panel slid upward easily, revealing an aperture behind. Then an exclamation escaped

"The papers are here!" he cried. "They are there as sure as you live, Dick." Then, reaching in his hand, he drew forth a package of papers, somewhat discolored with age, but intact and not

damaged in any way.

"Here they are, Dick!" Al cried. "Here are the papers that establish my identity beyond the shadow of a doubt and which will make me the master of this mansion. Glory, we are successful, my boy! And now to get out of here!"

At this instant a smothered cry of alarm sounded from behind the youth and, whirling quickly,

"What are you doing here?" the man cried angrily. "And how did you enter this house? Drop these papers, you young scoundrel, or it won't be good for you!"

The man was Austin Hanover.

#### CHAPTER XX.—Conclusion.

For an instant Al was disconcerted and then, feeling that he was in the right; that he was in his own home, held in his hands the proofs of his birth, the will left by his father—that he was, in fact, master of the situation, he faced the man who had so terribly wronged him and looked him in the eyes unflinchingly.

"What am I doing here, you ask, Austin Hanover?" he said, in a clear, ringing voice. "I came here to secure these papers, the will left by my father, proofs of my birth—for I am Albert Hanover, son of your half-brother, Gordon Hanoverand other important papers. I have the papers here and I am going to keep them. You have wronged me terribly, Austin Hanover, but you have come to the end of your rope and I am going to take possession of that which is my own by

"Boy, what do you mean?" gasped Austin Hanover, turning paler still at the youth's words; "what wild talk is this? You Gordon Hanover's son—impossible. He is dead. He died many years ago in Australia, where he was sent for his health."

"He is not dead; he stands before you!" said Al coldly. "He was sent to Australia by you for the purpose of being gotten rid of so that you might inherit all my father's wealth. You have had possession of this wealth for years, but the time has at last come when you must yield it up. I am Albert Hanover. I am the boy you sent to Australia years ago. I did not die, but lived to confront you and charge you with your crime—ay, and I can prove it, for I have not only the will, proofs of my birth and so forth here in this package, but I have a written confession from Bill Sykes, your poor, miserable tool in this affair."

With a wild, snarling cry, Hanover sprang forward, as if to seize Al by the throat, but the youth waved him back.

"Hands off!" Al cried. "It will be only the worse for you if you attempt any desperate tac-You have wronged me too much already and I do not propose to submit to anything fur-

ther in that line."

Al's tone and stand were so determined and there was such a dangerous look in the youth's eye that Austin Hanover feared to attempt vio-lence, and he paused and glared at the youth in impotent anger and despair. The man looked at the youth's face searchingly and it was evident that he was impressed with the belief that the young man had spoken the truth. Presently he spoke again, still in the husky, strained voice:

"Let me see your right arm bared."
"There is no necessity of doing so," Al replied.
"The mark is there. I am Albert Hanover and

you must, so far as you are able, right the wrong you have done me."

Austin Hanover seemed to realize that the

game was up.

"I guess you have told the truth," he said. "I recognize a likeness to your father's features in your face. I give in. I am willing to acknowledge everything and will make all the amends in my power. In this connection I must ask you, for the sake of my family, for the sake of my wife and children, to deal as lightly with me as possible. May I hope that you will do so?"

"You may," he said earnestly. "I shall not

"You may," he said earnestly. "I shall not bring the law into requisition to punish you, but will let you go your way. All I ask is that you yield up everything to me that is my due at this

time."

"Oh, thank you!" the man said fervently. "You take a great load off my mind. And there is enough for you. The property is worth as much as it was the day I got control of it, if not more, and you are worth at least three million dollars. Think of it—three million dollars."

"It is a good deal of money," said Al quietly, "but I don't care for that so much as I do for the fact that I have at last learned who I am; have found that there is a place that is my home. I have been a homeless wanderer for many years—all my life practically, and it seems pleasant indeed to think that at last I am to have a home. And now, how will we work this affair so as to keep the public from learning the truth of the matter?"

"It will be enough to simply give out to the public that the report of your death that was sent back from Australia was an error and that, after all these years, you have found your way back to your home. I, of course, will restore to you all your property and will leave Wyburn, going to the city, where I can begin life anew. Of course, you will not even let me have the one hundred thousand dollars left to me by your father for taking care of you, since I was false to my trust?"

"On the century for the scale of your family

"On the contrary, for the sake of your family, I shall allow you to keep that amount, Austin Hanover. It would not be right for me to be mean simply because I had been wronged."

Austin Hanover was almost overcome by Al's generous treatment of him and thanked the youth brokenly. Then, after some further talk, Al and Dick left the mansion, going out through the window as they had come in and lowering it from the outside.

"Did you succeed?" inquired Stokes eagerly, as the youths joined him in the shadows of the trees. "Yes, indeed, Sam," replied Al, and then he

told all.

When it became known that Albert Hanover, the son and heir of Gordon Hanover, who had been sent to Australia for his health when two years old and had been reported to have died there, was alive and had returned, it created great excitement in Wyburn, and when it became inown further that Albert Hanover was the youth who had been known as Al Payson, the extitement was at fever heat. Some people refused to believe the story at first, but when, a couple of weeks later, Austin Hanover and his family left Wyburn, going to the city, and the youth they had known as Al Payson took up his abode in the mansion, the doubters could doubt ne longer, but

had to acknowledge the fact. The change of masters at the mansion was not a distasteful one to the people of the village, however, as all liked Al and they had not liked Austin Hanover, but of all the people who were pleased by the change none were more so than the Hardys. The older Hardys, the parents of Dick and Mabel, had liked Al when they thought he was a poor boy, and now that he was a more than millionaire they, while they did not like him any better, for they were sensible people, were, nevertheless, glad to know that he was a friend to Dick and Mabel. And Dick and Mabel were more than pleased—they were delighted.

A year has passed. Al has long since installed Sam and Marie in his mansion, Marie as house-keeper and Sam as his right-hand man, and it is a happy little household—but the villagers, if you were to ask them, would tell you that they think it will some day be a happier one. Their reason for thinking so was simple. Albert Hanover spent so much of his time at the home of Mabel Hardy and took her riding with such regularity that, to the minds of the village people, it was as plain as A, B, C. Some day the young master of the mansion and the sweet, beautiful girl would be married.

The story of "Al, the Boy Acrobat," is ended. The youth had had his name on show-bills as "the boy acrobat" in a dozen different countries and half a dozen languages and had thus "flip-flopped into fame," and by leaving Wyburn with Rawson's Circus he had made the acquaintance of Sam Stokes and Marie and had learned who he was and had recovered his property—had "flip-flopped into fortune" as well—in fact, he had, as the sub-title of the story states, "Flip-flopped into Fame and Fortune."

Next week's issue will contain "THE NINE IN BLUE; OR, THE CHAMPIONS OF THE DIA-MOND FIELD."

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# AL, THE ATHLETE,

## OR, THE CHAMPION OF THE CLUB

By R. T. BENNETT

#### (A Serial Story)

#### CHAPTER XIV—(Continued)

"Good-by!" and he rang off.
The Midwoods, headed by their young champion, marched back to the gym in a body, and as the news of their glorious victory had preceded them to the townspeople who had not gone to the meet, they were cheered all along the line and felt very proud of their achievemnts.

The trophies they had won were put away, and after a short talk to the boys, in which he praised the strenuous efforts they had made, Al dismissed the youngsters and all started for their homes.

Al's mother had not gone to the meet, but she met him at the gate with an inquiring look on her kind face, and asked eagerly:

"Well, my son, how did you make out?"
"Beat them to a standstill," was the laughing reply, and she flung her arms around his neck and kissed him with all the pride of a fond parent, and said in happy tones:

"I am proud of you, Al!" "That pays me for all the trouble I had," he

exclaimed heartily. During dinner he gave his mother a detailed account of all the events of the day, and only refrained from telling her about the mean treach-

ery of his rivals, as he did not wish to worry her. After dinner he prepared for his call and made his way up Sunset Hill to Banker Harlow's hand-

some residence.

Jennie was at a window and saw him coming, and she answered the bell.

They met at the door with beaming faces.

"Oh, Al!" she cried, as he took her hand and raised it to her lips, "I am so glad you won today that I can hardly express my joy."

"It wasn't only the pleasure of winning," he answered, as he followed her into the parlor and sat down, "but some of my fellows nearly equaled the best professional records."
"Good! Good!" cried Miss Harlow. "Now tell

me all about it."

The boy complied, and when he gave her the particulars of the crooked work practiced by the Mercurys, she was overcome with anger and indignation and exclaimed: "Shame on them!"

"Now you can judge what sort of a fellow Drew

is," said Al.

"He can "He is a villain!" she exclaimed. never enter this house again. There's a strong suspicion in my father's mind that he was the burglar poor little Bud saw coming out of here the other night, and that is quite enough to make him an unwelcome caller."

"Any news of the boy yet?"
"None," she answered, tears starting to her

But these words had scarcely left her lips when

the telephone bell in the library rang, and they heard Mr. Harlow answer it with:
"Yes, this is 75 Sunset. Who are you."

An interval of silence, and then:

"Yes, Al Adams is here. Do you wish to speak to him?"

Another silence, finally broken by:

"I'll tell him. Good-bye."
Then the old banker entered the room, and

shook hands with the boy.

"Al," said he, "I just had a call on the phone from a person who called himself Scotty. He wants to see you right away on very important business at the bridge which spans the Blue Mountain brook."

"Why, Mr. Harlow," exclaimed the startled boy, "the only man of that name is the tramp who stole your son!"

"Good gracious!" cried the old gentleman excitedly.

"He may wish to speak to me about your boy."

"Heaven grant that it may be so!"
"I'll go and find out at once," said the young athlete, starting up excitedly. "Perhaps I may be able to bring you some news!"

"Wait!" muttered Jennie, laying a restraining

hand upon his arm.

The boy looked into her solemn eyes wonderingly, and asked:
"What now?"

"It may be a trap to get you in trouble."

"Don't worry; I am not afraid." "You must not go alone, Al!"
"Nonsense! I can—"

"Jennie is right!" interrupted Mr. Harlow. "I will send Patrick, the coachman, with you, and I intend to go myself, if necessary."

"No, no!" exclaimed Al. "You are too old a

man to engage in any dangerous work, Mr. Harlow. You will oblige me by staying here with your family. They may need your protection in your family. this house."

"Then I'll ring up the chief of police and have him send a couple of officers to the bridge to see

that you are not foully dealt with.

Al smiled and shrugged his shoulders. "I'll be back soon," said he.

And putting on his hat, he departed. The moment he was gone Jennie rushed down into the kitchen where the coachman was and told him to follow and aid the boy if it was necessary. She then gave him a hurried explanation, and he departed.

As Al walked briskly down the moon-lit road he did not see the big brawny Irishman following after him, with a revolver clutched in his fist, in his jacket pocket, but Patrick was there just the same.

#### CHAPTER XV.

#### The Lone Hut in the Woods.

The road to the Blue Mountain brook ran past the banker's house in the direction opposite to that leading to the town.

Al kept in the middle of the dusty road, and in five minutes he arrived in sight of the little rustic span and muttered:

"How in thunder did that tramp know I was at Mr. Harlow's?"

He concluded that Scotty had been shadowing him from his home, but had not dared, for some reason, to approach him before he entered the

house.

"After all," cogitated the boy, "it might have been some of Scotty's friends who saw me and told him about it afterward. At any rate, if there is any treachery going on I shall be on my guard to defend myself."

He reached the bridge and glanced around, but

saw nobody.

The faithful Patrick had quietly slunk into a clump of bushes, from whence he could see the

bridge without being seen himself.
"I wonder if that call was a fake?" muttered the boy, as he leaned against the hand-rail and waited to see if the tramp would put in an appearance. "It my not he been Scotty, after all!" Five minutes passed by in deep silence.

"I'll give him fifteen minutes," thought the young athlete, "and if he don't show up I'll go back to the house and tell the Harlows."

Another five minutes slipped by, and all of a sudden a voice that seemed to come from under

his feet roared out:

"Hello, dere, kid! I'm glad ter see yer!"

Al glanced down, and there was Scotty's head peering at him from under the bridge foot-path, the rest of his body being hidden underneath the structure, where he had evidently been concealed.

"Come up out of there, you rascal!" coolly an-

swered the boy.

"Is der coast clear?"

"Certainly."

"Sure yer hain't got no fly cops sneakin' ter nab me?"

"I came all alone."

"Alright, den, I'll come up!" and up he climbed. He looked just as dirty and ragged as he was the last time Al had seen him, and he had a nasty leer on his bristly face.

The boy regarded him in silence a moment and

"What did you telephone to me for?" "Jist ter have a little chin wit' yer."
"What about?"

"De banker's kid, o' course."

"Oh! Then you are prepared to return him to his parents?"

"Soitenly-fer a consideration."

"And what is that?" "Ten t'ousan' bones."

"Oh, you are on the make, eh?"
"Say, young feller, d'yer s'pose I'm workin' fer
de benefit of me healt'?" demanded Scotty, with a cheerful grin.

"What is your game?"

"I don't mind tippin' yer off ter me graft as long as dere ain't no guy around ter prove wot I say agin me in court."

"Out with it," ordered Adams curiously.

"Well, it's dis way: I'm de bloke wot hooked de kid when he wuz a baby, an' I'm de same gazabo wot swiped him from de woman in New York wot brung him up. Lastly, I'm de hairpin wot got him from youse-see?"

"I know you got him from me."
"Well, I wuz paid ter do it, I s'pose yer know."

"So I presumed."

"Well, I can't git nuttin' more outer de lobster wot hired me, so I am goin' over ter de enemy ter git paid ter retoin de long-lost child—see? Dat's

me wrinkle, an' you're de kid wot I'm doin' business wit'."

"You want me to act as a go-between, to see that you get the money in payment for the safe return of the little fellow, ch?"

"Dat's de ticket. Yer a good guesser, son, an' I'm proud of yer!"

"Where is the boy?" Scotty shut one eye and laid his finger alongside of his nose; then he squirted a long stream of tobacco-juice at a knothole in the bridge.
"Don't be so fly," said he. "I'm not looney yet,

child."

"What do you want of me now?"

"I want yer ter go back ter ole Harlow an' tell him de news. Tell him dat I want yer ter bring de dough ter dis bridge termorrer night at ten o'clock, an' I will be here ter git it, an' de moment it is in my flippers I'll take yer ter where de missin' boy is—see?"

"I understand."

"If yer tell de p'lice we'll kill de kid, an' Harlow will never see his brat agin. Dere is four in my gang, an' we'll all be on de watch ter see if yer layin' any traps fer us-understand?"

"If I were to nab you right now," insinuated the boy, "I suppose we could force you to tell us where the little fellow is, couldn't we?"

"I reckon yer could, if yer wuz big enough ter toin de trick," grinned the tramp, who thought Al was joking.

"Then here goes for a try!"

And with one spring Adams landed against Scotty's breast like a cannonball and knocked him down on the planks.

He made a grab for the tramp's throat as they went over, but unluckily he missed his grip, and Scotty let out a wild yell of "Hey, Rube! Hey, Mike!"

"Comin'!" roared a husky voice in the bushes, and a tramp appeared.

"Bad luck ter him, we'll help yer!" came another voice, as a second villain came from behind a tree and ran for the bridge.

"Hang on to him, Scotty!" advised a third man who rushed from under the bridge, and Al saw that he was going to be attacked by the whole

The boy was very spunky, however, and getting a grip on Scotty's long, unkempt locks of hair, he banged the tattered rascal's head on the planks with such fierce vehemence that he saw stars.

At this juncture Patrick suddenly sprang into view, and leveling his revolver at the onrushing tramps, he shouted warningly:

"Shtand back, there, ye blackguards, or I'll

A yell of terror escaped one of them, and he suddenly paused, and that brought the rest to a stop, with glaring eyes and panting breath.

Bang! went a shot from the revolver, and a howl of agony escaped one of the miscreants as the ball grazed his cheek.

The next instant he was off at a run. "Help!" bawled the rascal. "Save me, fellers!" Al was having a fierce struggle with Scotty.

(To be continued)

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## INTERESTING ARTICLES

"SILVER THREADS" FOR \$3 Eben E. Rexford, author of "Silver Threads Among the Gold," sold the poem to Frank Leslie for \$B, it was recalled at Lawrence College recently. Years later the words were put to music and the song swept the Nation. Rexford was eighteen then. He died in 1916 at Shiocton, Wis.

A very simple medium has been for many years employed in Russia for the preservation of wooden ties and telegraph poles, which is but little known, i. e., impregnation with brine. It was accidentally noted some years ago that the burying of a few pounds of salt alongside a telegraph pole very materially increased its durability. Since then the method has been systematically practiced, with the aid of brine on the sea coast. In large basins on the Siwaschen Bay the ties and poles are allowed to soak for three to four months, during which the wood absorbs about 70 to 100 per cent. of its weight of salt solution.

They have been discovering some extraordinary plants in England, plants which puzzled the best know gardeners in the entire city of London. One naturalist picked on the grounds of the Bradford sewage works 160 species of foreign plants. Among these were several Australian burrs, jimson weed, prickly popples from Mexico, other native to Peru, Siberia and the Azores. All were of a prickly nature. Investigation proved that the dust from wool combing establishments was being used as fertilizer, and the washings of wool were run into the sewers. The burrs of these foreign plants had come in the wool and grown. Other plants had sprung from seed in rags and others been prought in soil on foreign timber.

Th United States National Museum has in its historical collection the armchair of Marquis de Lafayette in which he is said to have sat on the day of his death. The chair is a recent acquisition, presented to the museum by the Marquise Arconati Visconti, of Paris. and it was through the interest of Professor Franz Curmount, of Brussels, that the presentation was brought about. The chair is in excellent condition. Its frame, simple design, is constructed of plain, unpolished mahogany pieces about two inches square. While it is a comparatively low chair, the seat being only a little more than twelve inches from the omy a fittle more than twelve inches from the floor, the curved back stands more than three feet high. The slightly rounded front legs support horizontal arms, and at the junction are surmounted with carved figures representing the heads of sphinxes. These constitute the only decoration on the chair. The seat and back, as a traditional seat the sides under the same area unbelowed. well as the sides under the arms, are upholstered in green silk worsted cloth, interwoven with a floral design resembling tulips. After the marquis died in 1834 the chair became the property of his grandson, Edmond de Lafayette, who in turn transmitted it to the donor, Marquise Arconati Visconti.

# LAUGHS

CAME THE DAWN

One freshman stayed up all night, trying to see the point to one of his professor's jokes, and then it dawned on him. Carolina Buccaneer.—

WHAT! A WOMAN DANGEROUS? A little woman is a dangerous thing. -Columbit Jester.

DRINK 'EM DOWN

Little Johnny: Mother, make brother play hide and seek with me.

Mother: Why, your brother is too old for such a childish game; he doesn't play hide and seek

Little Johnny: Then why did he put everybody under the table last night?

-Virginia Reel.

SAYS WHICH?

Governess: Here is a nice book from which I shall read to you.

Little Girl: All right read it, I'm going to sleep.
—Old Maid.

IS THERE A MORAL HERE?

Rome wasn't built in a day, but it was burned down in one night. -Louisville Satyr.

HER BEAU IDEAL

The beautiful girl in the restaurant leaned back languidly. It had been a wonderful dinner. In the soft glow of the shielded lights she had eaten the meal of meals. And he had been so attentive yet so unobstructive. He had carefully ordered for her, and had said never an unnecessary word, or made a gesture to spoil the spell. She felt she could love a man like him.

Now he was drawing nearer. The bosom of his dress shirt gleamed brightly. His Tuxedo fitted him like a glove. His tie was immaculate. He bent over her caressingly. What was he

saying . . ?

"Here is your check, madam: do you wish anything else?"

—Colgate Banter.

# Pistols On a Locomotive

Some years ago I used to run the engine of the "lightning express" from Burnham to Cannondale.

I left the former town at 12:17 at night.

My return trip brought me home at 10:41 the

following day.

This trip, up and back, made my day's work; and it was enough for any man to do, though the furious speed of this express condensed my actual work in the cab to about four hours. I would rather have lived a little slower, and been employed more hours in the day.

I had time enough to sleep in the round-house at Cannondale, but I used to take a three-hours' nap every evening before I started on my trip.

Burnham was the location of the State Prison. My wife had lots of friends, and when any of them came to see us, as they often did, they wanted to visit the prison.

They all seemed to have a taste for looking at

rogues.

I always had to go with them on these tours of

inspection.

I was well acquainted with several officers of the institution, and, after a few months, I knew the principal rogues and villains by sight.

Among these was a man whom I shall call Pillgreen, though that was not exactly his name.

He had a fearfully bad record as a rogue, and had spent nearly half of his lifetime in prison. He had been a burglar and bank robber, and

was so intelligent and skilful as to be a very dangerous fellow.

He had been sentenced to six months before I first saw him, to a term of twenty years, and I have no doubt the prospect before him was exceedingly dark and desolate.

Pillgreen was a very good-looking man, nearly or quite forty years of age.

In the ordinary walks of life no one would have suspected that Pillgreen was anything but a good man and a useful citizen.

His face was a pleasant one, and I was rather

interested in him.

The officers said there was no better prisoner

in the institution. He was careful to observe all the regulations,

and was docile and tractable in learning his trade. On my return from one of my trips to Can-nondale, I read in the local papers that Pillgreen had escaped from the State Prison.

He had been seen and noticed just before the prisoners were marched to their cells for the

It was evident that he had concealed himself in the shops, and during the night had scaled the

walls. It was certain that if Pillgreen was not apprehended within a brief period, his presence would soon be manifested by the robbery of some bank.

For three days the search was continued in the

vicinity of Burnham without success

The various parties on the alert for him had been unable to obtain even the faintest trace of the missing robber.

The boat was found at the bottom of the lake, near the place where it had been moored.

It was heavily ballasted, and being an old tub, it had leaked water enough to sink her, with the help of what was thrown into her in a squall in the night.

On the fourth day after the flight of Pillgreen, a cousin of my wife wanted to visit the prison,

and I went with her.

While there, I had some talk with one of the

officers about the fugitive.

I found that they felt very sore about the escape of their man, for such an event was an imputation upon their fidelity to their duties.

"I am sure he had a confederate in Burnham," said Lockwood, the officer who showed my visitor

about the institution.

"Have you heard of any suspicious characters about the place?" I asked.

"No; but these rascals are cunning enough to hide their tracks."

"Why do you think Pillgreen had a friend in town then?" I continued.

"He has had some help or he would have been discovered within twelve hours after he got out," persisted the officer. "He wore the prison uniform; and that would have betrayed him. could not have lived five days without food."

The next night was Saturday, six days after

the escape of Pillgreen.

At midnight, I had my machine ready to back up to the train as soon as the other engine should

switch off from the main track.

While I was waiting, a man by the name of Howth, whose acquaintance I had made within a week, jumped into the cab, and asked me if he might ride on the engine as far as Ucayga Bridge.

Howth had come to Burnham on Monday, when an uncle of my own had spent the day with me.

In the afternoon we had gone to the prison, and Howth, who had come up in the train with my uncle, went with us.

He was a man of good appearance, and I con-cluded that he was an old friend of my relative. At any rate, he spoke of Uncle John as though

he had known him all his life.

"The train don't stop at Ucayga Bridge," I replied, in answer to his request.

"It don't make any difference where you stop; for I only want to ride on a locomotive in the night," he added.

"We slow down at the bridge, but we don't stop till we get to Venega, fifteen miles further," I continued.

"Perhaps I can jump off at the bridge when you slow down; if not, I will go on to Venega," said he, evidently taking the permission for granted.)
"I was speaking to your Uncle John about riding on a locomotive; and he told me you would give me a chance to do so."

"As a rule no one is allowed to ride on the engine but the engineer and the fireman. should be glad to do anything I can to oblige my Uncle John."

"I will not speak to you on the way, or do anything to disturb you," he protested.

I consented to allow him to ride with me, and I have met others who had the same curiosity to ride on a locomotive.

The night was chilly, though it was in the early autumn, and he ran over to the hotel, which was opposite the station, for his overcoat.

While he was gone the "lightning express" thundered down the road to the stopping-place.

No stay was allowed beyond what was necessary to shift the engines, and I began to think my locomotive passenger would be too late.

But just as the tender was shackled to the baggage-car of the train he presented himself, closely wrapped up in a long overccat.

Howth leaped lightly upon the engine and took

his station on the footboard behind me. He did not speak to me, or I to him.

I never talk to anyone on the machine, for by keeping my mind wholly on my business, I have escaped all accidents so far which can be charged to me.

All went well till the train approached Ucayga

Bridge, where I began to slow down.

This was a precaution against accident, for a steamer left the landing early in the morning which was loaded during the night, and freighters were sometimes left where they should not be.

"I think I will get off here," said Howth.

His voice was so hoarse that I came to the conclusion that he had taken a bad cold during the run.

"I can't stop the train," I replied.

"Yes, you can," replied he, in a very decided tone.

I explained that it was contrary to my orders,

and I was already four minutes late.

He was very imperative, and his high tone

vexed me.

As the best reply to this, I pulled out the

throttle, and the machine began to jump.

I had hardly done so before I was conscious

that a pistol was aimed at my head.

"Stop her, or I'll blow your brains out!" said Howth, and it seemed to me that his voice had changed very much, though it was not so hoarse as it was when he spoke the first time.

I turned to look at him, and I found that instead of one pistol, he had one in each hand, pointing them at my devoted head.

He repeated his threat in a more savage tone. "Hold on a moment till I get around this bend,"

I replied.

A moment later I shoved in the throttle, but I had hardly done so before both of the pistols were discharged.

Brooks, the fireman, had suddenly 'hrown himself upon the assailant and dragged han down on the footboard.

The weapons were fired off by this act.

I lost not an instant in assisting Brooks, for Howth was making a desperate struggle.

I got the pistols away from him, and then the fireman let him up.

I did not suppose Howth would attempt any-

thing further.

The train was coming to a sharp grade, and

the steam was shut off.

As soon as Brooks released him, Howth leaped on the tank of the tender and then upon the top of the cab.

From this position he descended to the running board, and then passed out of my sight forward of the smoke-stack.

I pulled out the throttle to prevent the train

from being stopped.

The machine gave a smart jerk, which was instantly followed by a terrible yell from Howth.

It was a cry of agony, and I jammed in the throttle again. The train was nearly at a stand before, and the brake on the tender stopped it before it had gone fifty feet farther.

Brooks took his lantern, and we leaped from

the foot-board.

Howth was lying on his stomach on the cowcatcher, holding on with both hands, while his legs were dragging on the ground between the rails.

Both his legs were broken and bent back. Taking the lantern from Brooks, I looked the

man in the face.

It was not Howth. It was Pllgreen.

We put him on the train, and carried him to Cannondale.

The surgeons there attended to his case, and he was conveyed back to Burnham en my train in the morning.

He was returned to the State Prison.

It was six months before he was able to walk again, and no doubt he will stay out the balance of his long term.

Of course, Howth, or whatever his name may

have been, was his confederate.

He pretended to be the agent of a gas works

He concealed Pillgreen in the hotel till the search was relaxed in the vicinity of Burnham, and then resorted to the scheme indicated in my story to get him away.

No doubt the fugitive intended to go in the morning boat from Ucayga Bridge to the head of the lake, and there take the train for New York.

Howth was caught and sent to join his friend in the prison.

The reward and the extra reward were paid to me, and I shared them equally with Brooks, who was soon after promoted to the position of an engineer, for his pluck brought him to the attention of the master mechanic as one who was a skillful man, and not afraid even of Pistols on a Locomotive.

#### SPECIAL ROPES USED FOR CLIMBING

The ropes used by Alpine climbers is of special manufacture, combining as far as possible the differing qualities of strength, flexibility and lightness. Three qualities are in general use, being made from Sisal, Italian and Manila hemps, respectively, and occasionally, when cost is not a consideration, of silk. The latter, though very light and strong, is not so durable as the others. That which finds most favor among British mountaineers is known as Buckingham's Alpine rope; it is made of the best Manila hemp. In the year 1864, Mr. Leish recalls, a committee of the Aldpine Club made tests upon a number of ropes suitable for mountaineering. Of the two that were approved one was made of Italian hemp and the other of Manila. They both had a breaking strain of two tons and sustained the weight of a twelve stone man after falling from a height of ten feet. Non-mountaineers have sometimes considered this insufficient, but it is highly problematical whether the human anatomy could survive the sudden compression of a thin rope arising from any greater fall.

# ITEMS OF INTEREST

An acre of 12-inch ice usually will provide a harvest of 1,000 tons.

Venezuela has nearly 5,000 miles of telegraph lines, with nearly 200 offices.

Nearly 200,000,000 residents of India are dependent upon agriculture for their living, says the Chicago Tribune.

The Rev. James Cameron Lees, at the age of seventy-nine, last year walked 1,654 miles, and while minister at St. Giles's, Edinburgh, walked a distance greater than the circumference of the

The people of the United States use more coffee per individual than those of any other country except the Netherlands, and is the fourth in rank in the consumption of tea in proportion to the popu-

Dr. Walter O. Snelling, consulting chemist of the Bureau of Mines and of the Panama Canal Commission, now doing laboratory work in Wash-ington, has developed a liquid gas of which a little steel bottle will carry enough to light a house for a month. Snelling puts 2,000 feet of gas into a steel container four feet high and six inches in

NEW IDEA IN TAILORS' DUMMIES Wax "Sheiks" with insipid features and graceful postures are giving way in tailors' windows of Paris to figures representing real personages.

One shop displays its spring offerings on a figure obviously portraying President Doumergue. Not far away boulevardiers and Mayol, star of the Revues, done in wax, singing a song and setting off the latest in evening clothes.

Some of the new dummies are far from handsome, portraying as they do, tall, short, thin, fat and sometimes bald men.

POLICE TO TEACH PEDESTRIANS TRAF-FIC ORDINANCES IN PARIS

"Pedestrian Day" is shortly to be staged by the police to give jay-walkers a post-graduate education.

Every law and every ordinance is to be strictly enforced by traffic officers and every violation will be noted. Offenders probably will be informed of their guilt, but arrested only in extreme cases.

Pedestrians, generally, are "fairly good," the city traffic commission has agreed, after a recent survey of the streets and inspection of police records, but further improvement is considered possible.

Persians consider that tears shed at funerals effect great cures. If you attend a Persian fureal they hand you at the door, a small, fine sponge. By means of these sponges all the mourners' tears are collected and preserved in tiny vases of crystal. They are used afterward as medieine, for they are thought to have wonderful healing powers. During the service each mourner

keeps his sponge ready, and every tear that wells into his eye is sopped up before it has a chance to escape. The undertaker tiptoes politely about and extends tentatively the crystal vase, and those who have anything to add to its contents. squeede their sponges solemnly therein. Then, with a bow of acknowledgment, the undertaker tiptoes on his way extending the vase politely now to the right and to the left, murmuring in his gentle and soothing voice: "Have you shed, sir?" "Madam, have you shed?"

Old-time bandits were much more attractive than those of to-day. There is nothing chivalrous about the automobile robbers of America and France, as there was about such men as Cartouche. Here is an anecdote of which Cartouche was the hero: One evening he was crossing the Pont Neuf in Paris when he saw a poor wretch about to leap over the parapet into the Seine. The brigand stopped him and asked why he wanted to bid adieu to life. The would-be suicide informed him that he was on the point of bankruptcy, and that he preferred facing death to facing his creditors. Cartouche was touched, and told the man to call his creditors together on the morrow and they should be paid in full. The creditors assembled. Cartouche went over their accounts, paid them all and said good-by to his grateful beneficiary. It is almost needless to add that when the creditors left, Cartouche relieved them of all he had given.

PLANE RUSHES BABY FOOD

Modern transportation methods came to the assistance of Mrs. William Johnston of Detroit, now visiting her mother, Mrs. S. A. Glover, when a special brand of food required for her baby could not be obtained in London.

Mrs. Johnston telegraphed her husband that the baby food supply was exhausted and that it was not on sale in London. He wired back that he

would rush a supply.

A short time later an aviator presented himself at the Glover home with three packages he had carried by airplane from the border. He landed at Carlings Heights and persuaded a nearby motorist to drive him without delay to Mrs. John-

The baby's diet was not disturbed.

#### CONTINENT CROSSED BY AUTO IN 79H. 55M.

Lou B. Miller of San Francisco, known veteran of twenty-four speedy trans-continental trips drove into Jersey City at 9.55 recently, daylight saving time, in a dust-covered touring car, to hang up a new non-stop record of seventy-nine hours, fifty-five minutes from San Francisco to New York.

The previous record, established by Miller last August, was 83 hours 11 minutes. The distance was 3,385 miles.

His time to New York beat the fastest railroad time by eight hours.

The trip is being backed by the Stover Signal Engineering of Racine, Wis., to demonstrate the efficiency of a new type of headlight. Miller is traveling in a Chrysler Imperial 80 touring car,

# TIMELY TOPICS

#### TAKE CHAINS WITH YOU ON EARLY SPRING TOURS

Take along chains on your early season tour-This is the advice of the safety bureau of the National Automobile club. A trip which may start in fair weather sometimes encounters rain or snow or muddy roads, and it is better to be within the bounds of safety than to encounter difficulties through lack of proper preparation.

#### FRENCH GIRLS PREFER TRADES OF SEMI-DOMESTIC TRAINING

French girls prefer dressmaking, millinery and similar "women's work" to the "dressed-up" jobs of stenographer and saleswoman.

A third of the Paris girls graduated from trade schools are dressmakers and only one in twenty-five seek training as a stenographer or secretary.

Girls outnumber the boys two to one in these schools, which graduate approximately 1,000 well trained young persons each year.

#### TAXI DRIVER WITH ONE ARM

Victor Coubard, crippled French war veteran, though he lost his left arm at Verdun, has since driven a taxi 500,000 miles through the streets of Paris without causing a single accident of any kind. With extraordinary dexterity he manages to make his remaining arm do the work of two. His car running at full speed, Coubard lets go of the steering wheel for a fraction of a second so as to enable his only hand to blow the horn at street crossings or to apply the emergency brakes, according to circumstances.

#### MORE HOME BUYERS IN LAST TEN YEARS

While only 28 out of every 100 families in the United States own their homes the proportion is encouraging as more than fifty per cent, of the present total of home owners became such during the past ten years. Senator Fess, of Ohio, is authority for the statement that houses owned by cur laborers number two and one-half times the total of all homes owned in the British Empire.

Demand for the farm land in the east end and central part of Long Island, showing the trend in that direction of disrputed farmers nearer the big towns and of course to New York city, together with increasing attention to parking problems, are sure signs that the Island is being more densely populated.

# WORLD SUBMARINE TOUR REVEALS EARTH'S SECRETS

The exploits of Jules Verne's voyager under the sea have been emulated by a young savant of Holland, Dr. Vening Meinesz, who has recently returned from a circumnavigation of the globe in a submarine, during which he made many val-

ma submarine, during which he made harly var-uable scientific observations of the earth's crust. At certain places, he reports, objects weighed more than at others. These differences, which were actual though so slight as to be measured by only the most delicate instruments, are be-lieved to be due to variations in the density of the rocks composing the crust of the globe. So

delicate are the instruments used in such measuring that the motion of a vessel on the surface of the sea interferes with their proper functioning, out in the submarine Dr. Meinesz obtained entirely satisfactory results.

# APPROPRIATE COLORS IN EACH ROOM ADD TO BEAUTY OF HOME

A modern home is not modern unless it's filled with color. Living rooms must have their warm, sunny hues; bedchambers in cool refreshing tones. Even kitchen and baths are no longer done all in white; they must have color, too.

That mistaken notion that white alone is sanitary is fast disappearing. So long as the surface is waterproof and will stand washing with soap and water, it answers all requirements on the score of sanitation. But the wise purchaser of a home makes sure that trim, floors and other surfaces which need frequent washings are strictly waterproof. Otherwise they are hard to keep clean without injury and are marred easily by such things as leaky radiators, spattered water, or liquids spilled through accident.

The one way to make sure of satisfaction on this score is to insist that only finishes which have a national reputation for waterproof qualities and durability be employed—there are varnish finishes (the term includes high grade enamels and varnish stains) which are not injured even by boiling water, strong soap or acid spilled from a storage battery.

#### ART SOCIETY FOR 60-FOOT STANDARD TO RESTRICT HEIGHT OF SKYSCRAPERS

Drastic limitation of the height of buildings is suggested in a series of recommendations sent to the Board of Estimate by directors of the Municipal Art Society of New York. Recommendations by the society have, in the past, been given

serious consideration by municipal authorities.

The society would limit the height of future buildings to sixty feet, with the provision that they may rise to any height if adjacent space is left, which, if built to the standard height, would equal the additional cubic space occupied by that part of the building which extends above the standard height.

A retail business use territory would be established. This would differ from the present business use territory by a limitation of 5 per cent. floor area for manufacturing instead of 25 per cent.

Unrestricted territory would be changed to

business territory wherever possible.

Business territory would be changed to retail business or residence territory wherever possible. Court area space would be increased.

More adequate parking and delivery areas would be provided on adjacent property or inside all buildings, the location and use of which is liable to create special street congestion as a re-

sult of trucking or passenger traffic and parking.
The recommendations were made as a result of a study made by a committee composed of Grosvenor Atterbury, Walter D. Blair, Henry H. Curran, Samuel H. Ordway, Jr., Daniel L. Turner, Charles W. Stoughton and Richard Welling.

# PLUCK AND LUCK

# \_Latest Issues \_

- 1465 The Timberdale Twins; or, The Boy Champion Skaters of Heron Lake.
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- 1467 Rob Rollstone; or, The Boy Gold Hunters of the Philippines.
- 1468 Driven Into the Street; or, The Fate of An Outcast Boy.
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